Frank Herbert

Frank Herbert & Dune
Interviews, Notes, and Articles

Cover photo by Joel Warren

Special thanks to the compiler of Frank Herbert in His Own Words for contributing the timeline and various articles.

Timeline

1920 - Frank Herbert was born on October 8th in Tacoma, Washington.

1938 - Graduates high school. At age 19, FH moves to Southern California and, lying about his age, gets a job with the *Glendale Star*, thus beginning a career as a journalist on the West Coast newspapers that lasts for many years.

1940 - Marries Flora Parkinson in San Pedro, California. (divorced 1945)

1941 - Enlists in the US Navy and joins the Seabees, but is released six months later on a medical discharge.

1942 - Daughter, Penny, born 16 February in San Pedro.

1945 - Publishes first fiction under his own name, *The Survival of the Cunning* (a war story set in the Arctic), in *Esquire* magazine.

1946 - Attends University of Washington. Marries Beverly Ann Stuart on 20 June in Seattle.

1947 - Son, Brian Patrick, born 29 June in Seattle, Washington.

1951 - Son, Bruce Calvin, born 26 June in Santa Rosa, California.

1952 - Publishes first science fiction short story, "Looking for Something", in *Startling Stories*.

1956 - Publishes first science fiction novel, *Under Pressure* (aka: *The Dragon in the Sea*).

1964 - *Dune World* serialized in *Analog Magazine*, December 1963, January, and February 1964.

1965 - *The Prophet of Dune* serialised in *Analog*, January-May 1965. *Dune* published, wins Nebula Award.

1966 - *The Green Brain*, *Destination: Void*, *Eyes of Heisenberg*. *Dune*

wins Hugo Award.

1968 - *The Heaven Makers*. *The Santaroga Barrier*.

1969 - *Dune Messiah*.

1970 - *Whipping Star*. Begins lectures at the University of Washington on general and interdisciplinary studies.

1971 - *The Worlds of Frank Herbert* (short story collection).

1972 - *The Godmakers*. *Soul Catcher*. Ends his newspaper career. Retreats to a six acre farm on Washington's Olympic Peninsula where he divides his time between writing fiction and transforming the acreage into an ecological demonstration project.

1973 - *The Book of Frank Herbert* (short story collection). *Hellstrom's Hive*.

1974 - Jean-Paul Gibon purchases the film rights for 10 years with director Alejandro Jodorowsky.

1976 - *Children of Dune.*

1977 - *Children of Dune* nominated *Hugo Award* for Best Novel. *The Dosadi Experiment*.

1979 - *The Jesus Incident* (with Bill Ransom), Jodorowsky shut down the production of his movie

1980 - *Without Me You're Nothing: The Essential Guide to Home Computers* (with Max Barnard).

1981 - *God Emperor of Dune*.

1982 - *The White Plague*, Dino De Laurentiis purchases the film rights to *Dune*.

1983 - *The Lazarus Effect* (with Bill Ransom).

1984 - *Heretics of Dune*. David Lynch’s Dune is released, FH's wife of 38 years, Bev, dies of cancer after a ten-year fight with the disease.

1985 - *Chapterhouse: Dune*. Marries his former Putnam representative, Theresa Shackleford. *Eye* (short story collection - includes "The Road to Dune").

1986 - Dies February 11th at age 65, of a massive pulmonary embolism while recuperating from cancer surgery. *Man of Two Worlds* (with Brian Herbert).

1988 - *The Ascension Factor* (completed by Bill Ransom).

How to Build a World

TriCon, Cleveland
1966

This subject, [for a speech at the Pacificon II] was handed to me apparently because of the "Dune" serials in Analog. I must confess to some misgivings in tackling it. Better worlds have been built, you know. But since I've been called "a sacrilegious bastard" on numerous occasions, I guess I can add hubris to my sins.

Here's how Dune was built.

(I want to insert here the warning that this will be a rambling discourse: building a world is a rambling process with alluring sidelines difficult to resist — especially for a person who can't just go to the dictionary to look up a word without spending the next hour or so reading the dictionary.)

First, there was the idea — THE IDEA!

This idea originated almost ten years ago while I was doing a newspaper article. That article took me to Florence, Oregon, a coastal town with dune problems. Because it's the home of a coöperative project by State and Federal authorities seeking control of dunes, Florence has become a mecca for people with similar problems from all over the world. Tell the Florence Chamber of Commerce I mentioned this. It's true: Delegations to study dune control at Florence have come from such places as Israel, Chile, Italy, Spain, Algeria, Turkey, Libya, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia, Mexico — just to name a few.

At Florence, they've solved the dune problem at least to the extent of controlling sand movement — developing grasses to hold them, perfecting techniques such as plantings on plantings on the windward side to anchor a dune, plantings on the lee side to make them grow taller and form windbreaks.

In doing the newspaper article on this project I found hooked by dunes. Seriously — odd things can catch your Imagination. I had a

real thing for dunes. I began studying dry-land cultures because that's where most dunes are found. This is just another form of reading the dictionary.

Slowly, the writer in me began to rear up and I saw I might have the makings of a story setting here. (This was after about two years.) Then I began to think perhaps I had the makings of an entire world here — a world you might recognize somewhat if you'd ever lived in an arid region. A whole world, I thought — a planet in extremis for lack of water. People brutalized by this necessity. A culture, a civilization squirming out of such a morass.

Now, that's the chief thing most people remark where Dune is concerned — the dry planet ecology. But it was just a means to an end. A planet, in my way of thinking, is a kind of spaceship, a biosphere hurtling through uninhabitable regions. And the important thing for the story is the ship's occupants.

Let me say in passing — because this [Pacificon II] audience has just been treated to a discussion of Sword and Sorcery — that Dune is a Sword-&-Sorcery story. For purposes of story treatment, psi is an exact equivalent to sorcery — and you who've read this story know Dune's emphasis on cutting instruments.

The people, then: How does this world inflict itself on its people?

For this kind of world-building project there has to be a take-off point, something you as a reader can identify. As I've hinted, that take-off point for Dune is these dry-land cultures known to us here on Earth. For Dune, though, the dryness is amplified. That's not as simple as it might sound. If you stretch your imagination to the point where you can consider Earth as a living creature, it isn't a much greater stretch to think of the human population as Earth's disease. For much of Earth, humans act counter to a healthy, self-perpetuating ecology.

There is one region, though, where this virus-homo has modified his virulence and is less of a blight on the biosphere. That's in the dry regions. (Some of you may have noted that up to this point I've not used the word "desert". In the English language, "desert" has such extreme, one-value implications, while dryness is a relative matter,

even in the desert. Dune is dry. Some deserts, by comparison, are wet.) In Earth's desert regions, virus-homo uses extra care to nurture a full spectrum of those growing things — plant, animal, insect — which make human life possible. Husbandry here still has some of its ancient religious implications: marriage to the earth and the need to make the earth fertile. Here, we find an ancient tradition still active — of improving the land, of getting into the natural rhythm of things, of maintaining man as viable part of the surrounding ecology.

In these arid regions this has not always been the case, nor is it everywhere the case today. But it is here you find this phenomenon most dramatically displayed as part of folk cultures, accepted usage — "the way things are done." Resistance to change, conservatism, isn't always a non-survival characteristic. The tradition and culture of these desert people can look back on lessons of many mistakes and see the evidence of those mistakes around them even today.

For example, nomadic tribes with desert background began the destruction of the cedars of Lebanon. As a result, topsoil over a once-fertile region is scant and thin. The land is less fertile, produces less food than it did in Biblical times — although the region's rainfall is not sufficiently different to account for the change. Destruction of watersheds over vast regions of China had a direct bearing on China's legendary poverty. (It wasn't the completely controlling factor, of course; I'm not talking about total cause and effect, only tracing parts of immediate chains — a chancey procedure when discussing the land that originated Tao.)

Intimate association with the earth that sustains them, then, is a characteristic of these arid regions. In a sense, this is a characteristic of all the less fortunate areas of the Earth — but let's confuse exploitation with intimate use. Italian rice farmers exploit their land. Some Japanese rice farmers exploit their land. Wheat farmers of the American plains exploit their land. All of these people have a thing in common: they make little effort to fit their activity into any sustaining cycle of the countryside. More and more Japanese rice farmers are turning to chemical fertilizers. The Italians are far down that road. American wheat farmers paid once with a dust bowl. They have problems of exhausted soil in some

regions of Washington and South Dakota right now. Chemical fertilizers are filling some of the gaps — but more and more gaps are appearing. "Put and take" are not balancing out in these regions.

Let's contrast this with some other rice culture regions now: South China, Korea, southwestern Japan, India, Turkey, Sicily. (I'm making this rice-wheat comparison because both use large chunks of real estate and involve seeds of grass-type plants.)

First, these regions use animal and human excrement for fertilizer — a much maligned procedure because it quite definitely is a source of disease. Second, some are blessed with soil replenishment by floods. In both cases, the people live close to their dirt. It sustains them and they sustain it. These are wet climates, though: How about the deserts of Dune?

Well, both are cases of living intimately with the planet — and, most vital: in extremis the primitive does a better job of surviving. What is it about these primitives that helps them survive?

Most people in our country tend to think of inhabitants in rice culture regions as existing on a simple diet. Not true. The more primitive of these regions actually enjoy a wide variety of foods — but they eat things we don't normally consider food: wild and semi-domesticated plants, insects; they also eat all of the fish. They get their B vitamins from beer and their calcium from lime. They cook some foods a minimal time to conserve both fuel and food value. Other foods they've learned to long enough to make them digestible.

Example: During the Korean war, large numbers cf United Nations troops died in North Korean and Chinese prison camps. There was one dramatic exception: the Turks.

First, their religion told them and they believed (and could not be shaken from that belief) that they were better men than their captors.

Second, they recognized food when they saw it — in green leaves, grubs under logs, the soft inner bark of trees.

Third, they knew the rough rice their captors gave them had to be cooked a long time to make it digestible and they waited out that cooking time patiently.

Fourth, they stuck together as a tribe and helped each other.

Fifth, when they found their food, they didn't destroy the source. They took only part of the grubs, didn't ring the trees, left the green plant to create more greenery.

They were a primitive people with a long peasant tradition of pampering the earth, of fitting themselves into the earth's own cycle rather than upsetting the rhythms.

This is something you'll recognize as having been adapted to Dune. This a fact of Dune.

Ecologists are just beginning to recognize what most primitives know by instinct: The more kinds of life there are within the ecological domain, the more chemical energy there is bound up in living matter; where life teems and proliferates in intimate association — precisely here you find life most dependent on life's variety.

The energy interchange of life is most complicated. It's interdependent in ways we understand only dimly. Increasingly apparent is the fact that we still don't know the extent of our interdependence — one life form upon another. For this reason, I dealt only in generalities for some of this living interdependence on Dune. What details of the intertwining are known, those are larded through the story. Where precise facts are unknown, I skirted them rather than invent. Introducing unknowns in this area distracts from the few unknowns central to the story conflict.

But since a world does inflict itself upon its inhabitants, I had to solve for some of these unknowns. Thus you find birds of all kinds on Dune converted to blood drinkers, bats dependent upon human saliva for part of their moisture, dew precipitators (a logical and practical device that some manufacturer of chromoplastics such as DuPont should take up) — and Dune gives you the pure invention: the worm-spice-Little Maker cycle, a deliberate parody on the other

forms of interdependence.

Are you beginning to see how a world is built?

The dominating factor of Dune is its lack of water. Moisture, not water, becomes a matter of constant concern. Plants must preserve moisture by exaggerations of the ways they do it on Earth desert.

Humans must do the same.

You can come right out and state these survival methods — and in some cases I do: giving details of stillsuits and other desert clothing, pointing up reclamation of the body's water. A more powerful device, though, is to make these "facts" appear as part of the general culture. For this you go to the language because language is the map of culture. The language of Dune is filled with clues to the planet's severity, some invented for the occasion, some borrowed from the languages of Earth's primitive desert cultures.

"Speed is a device of Satan." — Arabic

"The sun is your enemy, the moon your friend." — FrankHerbertic

Take note of Dune's many words for knife, the use of landscape features as calendar markers (Navajo), the many words for ways to kill with poison, the refined uses of assassination. Without being told of it specifically, you know these are important matters in the culture. Note the general austerity of life during the nomadic migrations on Dune contrasted with the richness of their surroundings in semi-permanent camps, the artistic treatment of everyday tools. These are civilization surfacing.

Special words for items necessary to life betray the background of the culture. Note the many ways in Dune that words for water are coupled to other words implying use or function.

Language is the map of the culture. Arabic, for example, has some sixty words for camel or camels. This one fact alone tells you the importance of an Arab's survival. [No doubt the Arabs are similarly impressed with the number of words we use for all various kinds — tracked, wheeled, armored, racing, or whatnot — of camelless

carriages.]

This is not a mere surface phenomenon. We only know a world through our human reactions to it. We record these reactions in our languages — and sometimes we bury our reactions, our judgements, in our definitions. The language moves on and the original judgements are mostly forgotten. Those judgements still exist, though. They map our world as it has inflicted itself upon us.

These many hidden assumptions in our most common words trace out our cultural history, our wanderings, and our wonderings. Here are a few examples for your amusement:

- ATONE — to become at-one with oneself — from OFr.
- BARGAIN — from LL for boat and to haggle, both referring to imported goods. Note the implication that something brought by boat was cheaper and subject to greater depression in price.
- SMUGGLE — we get this one from Gr and Anglo-Saxon, out of words meaning to creep under cover of smoke.
- DELIGHT — its root words mean enjoyable to the tongue.
- PRECARIOUS — from L: full of prayer.
- MARTYR — from Gr word for witness. Martyr carries an old custom in its definition — trial by ordeal. If you died you were innocent: "a witness of the gods"; but if you lived through the ordeal, you obviously had the Devil's help and were immediately slain.
- VILLAIN — a social judgement: a dweller on a farm, a rustic, a hayseed, was originally a villein.
- AUTHENTIC — from Gr meaning one who acts for himself, thus does the Job well. "If you want a Job done well, do it yourself." Curiously, the early English meaning carried the idea of demanding obedience: "Do it the way I tell you to do it!"
- CHAGRIN — literally, you get Turkish gooseflesh: shagreen, the rough leather from the rump of a horse.
- ZANY — the idiot protected by the gods, a frequent idea among primitives, from the Hebrew for "the Lord shows mercy on such a one."
- CHALLENGE — rooted in Latin for false accusation and in its

original English sense carried the definite idea of calling a person out purely for the sake of cutting him down in a duel.
- (PROVE — the older meaning, "test or try the validity or worth of", has gradually been replaced by "establish validity or worth of". The old saying, "The exception proves the rule," made more sense with the older meaning.)

Reading the dictionary is fun, isn't it?

Okay, these are some of the places you dig up the knowledge on how to build a world. There are others.

First, you have your own experiences of living. I've told you about Florence and the fact article by which I earned my bread and beans. There's also the fact that I've lived in the Sonora desert of Mexico — and I could talk to you all night about that.

Beyond this, there's the fact that I've read more than 200 books, pamphlets, reports, and special papers on dry land ecology, desert societies, and animal and human adaptations to deserts of all kinds ranging from the Gobi through the Sonora, the Sahara, and the Kalahari. You'd be surprised at the extensive specialized material on these subjects no farther away than your library. It ranges from how far a soldier in the desert can march in one day on how much water to how to control poisonous reptiles. You get hundreds of curious sidelights such as the fact that threats to survival increase the viability of pine seeds. Pine trees whose seeds normally are viable only once in every nine years will sprout every year when the trees are threatened by invasion of dunes.

Humans show the same characteristic. Sexual instinct increases under stress, even under the stress of starvation, a fact that carries most terrible implications when you combine it with the pressures of population on food sources.

You were warned this would be a rambling discourse. It rambled the way research for Dune rambled. By this device, I hoped to give you some feeling of the slow growth of the idea into a full-fledged story. It's like a ship gathering barnacles, collecting thousands of details. Many of those details contribute to the story without ever appearing in it. They're like the cultural traces you find in

languages. They contribute to the way the characters behave. The details are present as roots if not as foliage. In one sense, such details are like genes: they help shape the finished product from inside.

The finished product, of course, is the story and the world.

During this talk, I've been doing something — sometimes consciously — that I once did purely unconsciously: referring to Dune only as a story. Not a novel, but a story. A friend who'd noted this characteristic of my conversation once brought me up short by calling my attention to it.

"Why do you always say you're working on a story and never on a novel?" he asked.

It took some digging in my own roots and I had to admit finally that I had an unconscious assumption: If I don't tell a good story, even if I create a world, there's nothing novel about it.

Frank & Beverly Herbert
interviewed by
Dr. Willis E. McNelly,
"Recording at the house of Frank Herbert"
[Fairfax – (CA), February 3, 1969]

*Professor **Willis E. McNelly** recorded and typed an interview that he made with **Frank Herbert** and his wife **Beverly Herbert**, in 1969 and sent it to Turkey in 1997.*

*Professor **McNelly** has stated that we may use this text in any way we like.*

INTERVIEWEE: Frank Herbert (FH) and his wife, Beverly (BH)

INTERVIEWER: Willis McNelly (WM)

SUBJECT: Herbert's science fiction novels, "Dune" and "Dune Messiah"

DATE OF TAPE: 3 February 1969

DATE OF TRANSCRIPTION : February-April, 1970

WM: This tape recording is being made February 3rd. 1969, in the home of Frank Herbert in Fairfax, California. Frank and his wife Bev are sitting around including myself, Dr. Willis E. McNelly of Cal. State English Department, Fullerton, California; sitting around, talking about science fiction. Frank Herbert, as we all know, is the author of "Dune" and many other science fiction novels. Frank, I wonder if you'd tell us a little bit about the origins of "Dune". You started a little earlier and you said you could trace the germinal idea?

FH: Oh yes. The idea came came from an article (I was going to do an article, which I never did) about the control of sand dunes. What many people don't realize is that the United States has pioneered in this, how to control the flow of sand dunes, and it started up here at Florence, Oregon. There is a pilot project up there of the U.S. Forest Service which has been so successful that it has been visited and copied by experts, related departments from Chile, Israel, India, Pakistan, Great Britain, several other countries…

WM: Well, I know I drove along the Oregon coast this summer and you had mentioned this a year ago, that it had begun with this, what was happening along Oregon. I remember stopping t one for there, right south of Columbia River, it is Oregon State Park now…

FH: That's, well, Florence is considerably south of that.

WM: South of it.

FFH: Yes. It's about centrally located on the Oregon coast and it was an area where sand dune blew across Highway 1. U.S. Highway 1, frequently blocking the highway, and the forest service put in a test station down there to determine how they could control the flow of these sand dune. And I got fascinated by sand dunes, because I'm always fascinated by the idea of something that is either seen in miniature and the can be expanded to the macrocosm or which, but for the difference in time, in the flow rate, and the entropy rate, is similar to other features which we wouldn't think were similar. Like a river…

WM: How long ago was this, by the way?

FH: Oh, this was in '53. This was considerably…

WM: Fifteen years ago, more or less…

FH: Yes. It was a long time ago. Sand dunes are like waves in a large body of water; they just are slower. And the people treating them as fluid learn to control them.

WM: Fluid mechanics, in other words.

FH: That's it. Fluid mechanics, with sand. And the whole idea

fascinated me, so I started researching sand dunes and of course from sand dunes it's a logical idea to go into a desert. The way I accumulated data is I start building file folders and before long I saw that I had far to much for an article and far too much for a story, for a short story. So, I didn't know really what I had but I had an enormous amount of data and avenues shooting off at all angles to gather more. And I was following them … I can't read the dictionary, you know; I can't go look up a word…

WM: (Laughter)

FH: I get stopped by everything else on the opposite page. But … so, I started accumulating these file folders, which I'll show you later, and as a result, I finally saw that I had something enormously interesting going for me about the ecology of deserts, and it was, for a science fiction writer anyway, it was an easy step from that to think: What if I had an entire planet that was a desert? During my studies of deserts, of course, and previous studies of religions, we all know that many religions began in a desert atmosphere, so I decided to put the two together because I don't think that any one story should have any one thread. I build on a layer technique, and of course putting in religion and religious ideas you can play one against the other. Now this is … you see, I'm talking about surface now…

WM: That's right.

FH: I'm not talking about the way things are layered…

WM: …within the novel itself.

FH: That's right. Yes. The way character is developed for various reasons in the story … this is just the germ of the idea, but that's where it begins.

WM: It began fifteen years ago, then. Well, what made you or at what point did you go from the sand dunes of Oregon and the ecological background *there* to the decision to utilize let's say the Arabian mystique as another counter notion or contrapuntal notion working within the novel?

FH: Well, of course, in studying sand dunes, you immediately get into not just the Arabian mystique but the Navaho mystique and the mystique of the Kalahari primitives and all…

WM: Kalahari primitives?

FH: Yes, the Kalahari desert, the black foot (people) of the Kalahari and how they utilize every drop of water. You can't just stop with the people who are living in this type of environment: you have to go on to how the environment works on the people and how they work on their environment. Just as … I mean, you could look at this thing on the Oregon Coast quite simply, if you wanted to, and say, yes, the sand was covering the highway, and that's bad, so…

WM: …so we plant certain grasses, and that stops the sand from moving, and that's good.

FH: And that's the end of it, you see, that's the end of it. But if you start going into the mechanics of how the United States Forest Service set up this project and all of the internal politics undoubtedly that were involved … I only know part of them … but I do know enough of them to know there were quite a few more … Then you would probably have a story there, a "main street" type of story. But I got off on a different kick because of the science fiction angle and the emphasis on ecology. It's been my belief for a long time that man inflicts himself on his environment … that is, Western man.

WM: I think we can see that just looking around us: the simple thing of beer used to be packed in bottles, which eventually disintegrated, then it was packed in cans, and that took at a fifty-year half-life, and now it's packed in aluminium cans, and that, you know, lives for ever, and we're gradually corrupting…

FH: Unless it's in salt water…

WM: …Yes, well, all right, but we're gradually corrupting our environment as a result of that kind of thing.

FH: Plastic is the thing that we…you know, Bev and I were up on the Washington coast last year and an area unspoiled, originally

very primitive area where the Mawka tribes lived, and so on, and even there, down among the driftwood logs on that primitive beach, that almost unspoiled beach, you frequently, much too frequently, come on these blue, orange, green, white plastic containers … Purex, Ivory Soap … and they're virtually indestructible There they are … they float …

WM: Well, man is then, as you view him, a creature who ecologically is a destructive force, a divisive force.

FH: Well, we tend to think in Western culture … I'm talking about Western man, you realize that.

WM: Yes.

FH: We tend to think that we can overcome nature by a mathematical means; we accumulate enough data and we subdue it.

WM: And establish parameters of that data and subdue it.

FH: Yes. We subdue nature. This is a one-pointed vision of man, because if you really start looking at man, Western man, you'll see that you could cut him right down the middle and he's blind on that backside, you see.

WM: This is the point you made earlier, Bev, in talking around about the death of the planetary ecologist in "Dune" being a very touching spot, I think you said…a very moving…

BH: Well, I felt also it was a very significant point. A lot of the story swung around this: how the ecologist died. I thought it was very important that the planet killed the ecologist.

WM: Even though the planet … I mean, even though the *ecologist* was technically able to subdue anything within that…

BH: Well, there he lay dying…

WM: Dying, and…

BH: And understanding everything that was happening to him.

WM: Exactly.

BH: Much more than someone else dying in the desert would have. Complete understanding … I think it made it more horrible, the fact that he completely understood…

WM: That he knew what was happening to him and understood it and was technically capable of controlling it.

BH: He knew it had gotten him.

WM: Yes.

FH: This of course was done deliberately for that purpose … to turn … it's a turning point of the whole book, but … a pivot, you might say … and the very fact that Kynes, who is the Western man, in my original construction of the book, sees all of these things happening to him as mechanical things doesn't subtract from the fact that he is still a part of this system because it is observing him. He's lived out of rhythm with it and he got in the through of the wave and it tumbled on him.

WM: And we're polluting our atmosphere, we're polluting our rivers, we're polluting our beaches because we don't understand the principles of ecology, among other things.

FH: Well, ecology, as somebody said…and I use this…I don't recall…I'd like to contribute this, but I don't recall where I encountered it … I did read over two hundred books as background for this novel … somebody said that ecology is the science of understanding consequences.

WM: I remember that.

FH: Lovely expression! And of course we're … each of us, individually, is the product of everything that has happen to us, and this happened to me and hit me, and so I used it, because, as far as I was concerned, one of the purposes of this story was to delineate consequences of inflicting yourself upon a planet, upon your environment.

WM: So you have a number of forces, then, that are inflicting

themselves upon the planet. You have the Fremen forces, you have the forces of the House of Atreides, do you pronounce it..?

FH: Atreides.

WM: Atreides. (I'd love to examine with you the possible implications of the House of Atreus in the Greek legend there.) And you have the off-planet forces of the Spacer's Guild and the entire Imperium also as being forces inflicting themselves on this planet.

FH: The name of the game is power, you see.

WM: Yes.

FH: It…as it is today; we play the game today with counters called money and we talk about laws of supply and demand and so on. There *is* a law of supply and demand as long as you only have one form of exchange, but once you start getting other media of exchange, such as force, then the law of supply and demand gets different beats on it, different rhythms.

WM: It may interest you to know that on of the…in fact, the major question on my final examination for my science fiction course this last…two weeks ago was the…asking the class to examine the effects of power in its various forms, abuses and uses in two of the major works read during the semester, and…you're mentioning power just now as being the name of the game as far as Arrakis is concerned…

FH: Yes. You see, Western man has assumed that if you have…that all you need for any problem is enough force, power, and that there is no problem which won't submit to this approach, even the problem of our own ignorance.

WM: (Laughter)

FH: Which, you see, throws it out the window right there because it is an asinine assumption, and it is the basic fallacy of Western man's approach to living. Now, I'm not saying that we immediately drop this and adopt a vendetta…

WM: Although that might not be a bad idea.

FH: No, we need what I would call a science of wisdom.

WM: I think among the things that we need…and this is indicated to a certain extent in the novel…but, we need a clear distinction in our minds…the minds of Western man…between the ethical norm and the moral life. The moral life is subject to change, it is the law, etc. etc. etc., but the ethical norm are those things which we must do because they are the proper thing to do regardless of the law.

FH: They're an abstract.

WM: They are an abstract, and this conflict between the moral and the ethical norms we see obtaining in certain situations within "Dune", as I recall…at least I could extrapolate…

FH: Yes, that's correct. But the moral norm, as I saw in "Dune", was something that is imposed upon people by their environment.

WM: Yes.

FH: I mean, it's as fixed as how many wives a man in his culture might be able to support and thereby have, or what possessions he can carry from one stopping place to another, and how this would control the moral laws, the … that we build up in society. We see it in our society, for example, out of our nomadic background and herdsman background…we see all kinds of moral injunctions which grew out of that and which we accept today logically … I'm not trying to denigrate them…

WM: Yes.

FH: But we can trace them this way. Now this is where moral law comes from. Ethical law takes a step in another direction, and it says that I, the thinking animal, see that the logical consequences of these moral actions are such and so and maybe I'd better modify the moral law slightly by a higher ethical law…

WM: I find this that in one of the … or some of the internal conflicts which are bothering Paul, that the ethical norm which he sees as being one of say absolute rightness as opposed with the law of moral necessity, and these are clashing in him … these are

tensions that work within Paul which cause him, I think, to have a depth of characterisation that you don't normally find within the normal science fiction novel.

FH: You hit on, of course, the way the character of Paul was constructed. It was the conflict between absolutes and the necessity of the moment.

WM: Yes.

FH: And…

WM: It's almost an existential necessity, incidentally, as I caught it…as I read it.

FH: That's right; that's absolutely right. Absolutely.

WM: (Laughter) Gee, thanks!

FH: You see, this is an exercise in showing up, you might say, the fallacy of absolutism.

WM: Even to be absolute about being non absolute, because Paul is bothered with that very problem.

FH: That's right.

WM: How absolute can he be and yet…in his relationships with his subordinates; with Stilgar, for example, if he's too absolute, he loses…you know…he gains…how did you put it in the novel?.. he saw … he sees the loss of a friend and the gain of a worshipper, almost. I…

FH: He gains…he loses a friend and gains a worshipper.

WM: A worshipper. Yes; and this kind of conflict: if he's too absolute here and non absolute there or in the necessity…when the tribe tries to force upon Paul the apparent necessity for killing Stilgar and he has to talk the tribe out of one of their tribal rules in order…

FH: A moral…

WM: Yes, right.

FH: A moral rule.

WM: A moral rule.

FH: And you see how the moral rule was developed out of the necessities of their background.

WM: Yes. Exactly.

FH: And he was given them, then, an ethical rule.

WM: Yes, and yet this conflict is continual, within Paul, I think, and it makes, for certain added dimensions in the novel that again the normal science fiction novel does not have. Well, you began this, then, in ’53, and you began doing research and filling file folders with facts and extrapolating to the sand dune planet. Tell me further about the writing process itself.

FH: Well, this was the first book where I really started carefully applying these ideas about the building of a rhythm within a story.

WM: Would you define this a little bit more for me, please?

FH: I will. I’ll be specific about it and I can use an analogy, which is familiar to both of us, in poetry, but it is used only as an analogy…

WM: Ok.

FH: You know how you choose the word in a given poem to control the beat of a poem?

WM: Are you familiar…

FH: The way…

WM: …familiar with Hopkins’ poem, “The Windhover?” If not, I’ll get it out for you later and show you how there is one word in there which absolutely controls the total poem.

FH: Yes; this happens in many poems.

WM: Many poems…

FH: Yes, and the poem that develops a certain fixed rhythm. Now by changing the phraseology, placement of words, you can change that rhythm; you can slow it down, you can speed it up. Well, there is an analogous thing in prose. I think this is quite easily defensible, that length of sentence, number one: modifying clauses…

WM: Variety of sentence structure, right.

FH: Variety of sentence structure…all these things control the pace of controlled reading or controlled…controlled…silent reading or oral…and I work orally, because I think that the language was spoken long before it was written, and I think that unconsciously we still accept it as an oral transmission.

WM: That's something I'm going to have to try with my classes… reading parts of "Dune" aloud to them. I've done this … I do this as a standard device when I teach Joyce or Yeats or Eliot… I read great gobs of it aloud, in parts.

FH: Well, this was done deliberately as to control that oral pace by the length of sentence, by the variety of sentence, by the words in the sentence, whether long convoluted words or short chopping words…

WM: Anglo-Saxon.

FH: Anglo-Saxon as against Latin.

WM: Latin.

FH: I controlled the pace, so I have several rhythms built into the story deliberately: one is a long-term rhythm…and we'll get to the ending of the book in a minute. I…the ending is camp, high camp. Deliberately. And a number of people, interestingly, have seen it. I wanted to say…

WM: I found it sheer action, almost for the sake of action.

FH: Yes.

WM: And overly dramatic, maybe; and, you know, "in the future they will call us wives," I said yeachch! almost. But you call it high camp. I hadn't thought of it that way.

FH: Well, I wanted to turn the story around on itself, but in two very specific ways. And obviously you don't limit the way it turns. If you do that…if you do one way that you know of..

WM: Sure…

FH: One, I was poking a little fun at the idea of the person who always sees things verbally and must write about them and record them, you know. The historicity of anything that happens, you see. You're not living it, you're recording it.

WM: Yes. This is what we're doing right now.

FH: Yes. But we're having a good…

BH: The man who never sees anything except through his camera viewer.

WM (to B): Say that again, please.

BH: The man who never sees anything except through his camera viewer. He sees the whole world, you see, in through that little square box.

FH: The view hunter.

WM: Right.

FH: Yes; so I wanted to kind of have a little snicker about this, you see, right at the end, and you deducted that sheer action treatment there. And you see how that this does what I'm describing…

WM: Yes. And that is a limited point of view, actually; the sheer action treatment…

FH: Yes. That's right. And also by making it a man to man battle at that point between Paul, who is an extremely complex character, and this almost stick figure, black, you see…

WM: Who is sort of, in many ways, Paul's counterpart.

FH: Exactly.

WM: He's a foil, in the classic sense of the word.

FH: A foil in the classic sense, in other places.

WM: Yes. Right.

FH: But at this point he becomes that…that impossible thing, that non-existent thing, the absolute evil.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, and so we turn the whole thing whirling backward through the story. There was another thing there, in the pacing of the story, very slow at the beginning. It's a coital rhythm all the way through the story.

WM: It's a what?

FH: Coital rhythm.

WM: OK.

FH: Very slow pace, increasing all the way through, and when you get to the ending of it, I chopped it at a non breaking point, so that the person reading the story skids out of the story, trailing bits of it with him. On this I know I was successful, because people come to me and say they want more and…

WM: I have said this to my classes that, in many ways as satisfying as "Dune" is, I find it unsatisfying because there are so many unanswered questions; you don't tie up the loose ends of, say, Paul's sister, unless you read…what is it?.. a "Huntress of a Thousand Worlds" (Laughter)…that marvellous little…little footnote of Princess Alia. But… or several other things. The whole question of the Spacing Guild itself and how it got to be the way it was is handled very…you know…

FH: Well, let's…let's examine something, as far as fiction in general

is concerned…

WM: All right.

FH: Now there are other reasons why stories are remembered, and I'm talking about story in the classic sense of the *jongleur* who goes from castle to castle to earn his meal.

WM: All right.

FH: Entertainment…

WM: Sure.

FH: The stories that are remembered are the ones that strike sparks from your mind, one way or another. It's like a grinding wheel. They touch you and sparks fly.

WM: Would this be something like the Miller's tale of Chaucer or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, if you please?

FH: Yes, indeed.

WM: Or, well, we could adduce thousands of other examples up to, say, Treasure Island or what you will. There's sparks there.

FH: OK.

WM: I understand your term.

FH: Now we all have stories that we go on with after we finish reading them. As children, we can remember playing Treasure Island…

WM: Or playing Tom Sawyer…

FH: Or Tom Sawyer…any of these. We remember playing these. The story stayed with us…the characters and their conflicts, their joys, their play all stayed with us.

WM: And it enkindled sparks in our own imagination, so that we were then active in creative play.

FH: That's exactly right! We went on and told the story ourself…

WM: Yes.

FH: Now, I deliberately did this in "Dune" for that purpose. I want the person to go on and construct for himself all of these marvellous flights of fantasy and imagination. I want him to…you see, you haven't had the Spacing Guild explained completely…just enough so that you know its existence. Now with lots of people, they've *got* to complete this.

WM: Yes.

FH: So they build it up in their own minds. Now this is right out of the story, though, you see…

WM: Yes. Or the whole…

FH: The sparks have flown.

WM: Bene (Bené) Gesserit, you pronounce it?

FH: Bene (Benny) Gesserit, yes.

WM: Bene Gesserit. The…their whole mystique and so on is relatively unexplained. Why do they want the Kwisatz Haderach in the first place? You see, is relatively, at the time…

FH: The name of the game is power.

WM: Yes, and they want power. That…that explains it to a certain extent but…

FH: They want power in a specific way. You know, I've always been amazed by the statement or by the label of psychological warfare. There can be no such thing as psychological warfare…if you develop a psychological weapon sufficiently that it is destructive to any potential enemy, it will destroy you with the enemy…it's a two-edged sword without a handle, and if you grab it hard enough to wield it, you're going to…

WM: It's self destructive.

FH: Yes.

WM: So we could have a variation of the Lord Acton notion: power corrupts both the user and the receiver of the power, both absolutely…

FH: Right. Acton saw it.

WM: How interesting. I hadn't thought of the…who power corrupts…

FH: Now the Bene Gesserit see this. You see how they keep themselves in the background.

WM: Yes, that's true.

FH: They want a user of power they can control.

WM: I see…with safety to them.

FH: That's right. It's a safety device, you see, and I say this in several ways, not in this way, not in this blatant, you know, way, but implying it with all of its permutations, because there's much more to this. We could go on for several hours discussing this aspect of it.

WM: Yes. The whole attitude of Reverend Mother Gaius Mohiam, for example…Helen Gaius Mohiam…yes, I see how we could… various aspects of it…well, I-I'd like to…I'd like to examine this a little bit further in some of the religious constructs.

FH: Before we got into that…

WM: OK.

FH: Let me tell you something. I was up at Sonoma State last month, talked to a class up there, and the question that seemed to attract the most attention from the class…somebody asked back there, what's all this nonsense about controlling people with voice?

WM: (Laughter)

FH: There seemed to be a lot of agreement with this point of view, that it's impossible to do this. And so I said, we do it all the time.

WM: Of course we do!

FH: And it's amazing to me that anybody could even begin to question this as a fact of our existence. And they couldn't see it, so I said, well, I'll give you an example. I'm going to describe a man to you. You know this man. And I'm going to give you a task of controlling him by voice after I've described him and after you recognise him. I said, this is a man who was in World War I as sergeant, came home from World War I to his small town in the mid-west, married his childhood sweetheart and went into his father's business, raised two children, who he didn't understand… and they don't understand him…He joined the VFW and the legion, went on every picnic, every convention, lived by the double standard (he thought). Now on the phone, strictly by voice, I want you to make him mad.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Oink! Oink! Oink!

FH: Any one of a hundred thousand variations.

WM: Yes, certainly, certainly.

FH: Simplest thing in the world. Now what we're saying here is that…see, I-I've drawn a gross caricature.

WM: Of *course*!

FH: But, we're saying that if you know the individual well enough, if you know the subtitles of his strengths and weaknesses, that merely by the way you cast your voice, by the words you select…

WM: By the intonations…

FH: Whatever…

WM: Whatever.

FH: Yes, right. You can control him. Now if you can do it in a gross way, obviously with refinement you can do it in much more subtle fashion, and it's done all the time in politics.

WM: And this is one of the techniques, incidentally, that science fiction, I think, does. It takes a possibility or something that does actually exist today and extrapolates from that, perhaps refines it, makes it more specific.

FH: The science of control by voice.

WM: Yes. Exactly.

BH: Isn't there a word in semantics where these messages that we get across…what was?..

FH: Metamessage.

BH: Metamessage.

WM: Metamessage.

FH: It's a well recognised thing in semantics and you see it… Hayakawa uses the example: you're talking, you've met somebody for the fist time, maybe at a business meeting in a convention, and you get acquainted and you're speaking. You exchange views and at the end of it you say, "We must get together for lunch sometime." Now, under one example of this, the fellow will call you the next week or you'll call him and you *will* get together for lunch, and hen knows he's supposed to call you and make this luncheon date. Under the other example of this same phrase, he knows that this is "Goodbye, I don't care to talk to you any more." But it's the same phrase.

BH: And they're both polite.

FH: They're both polite.

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: And this is the metamessage.

WM: Yes…the hidden message underneath the message, and so on…

FH: Yes.

WM: Yes, I can understand that. Well, I had no trouble understanding the question of the voice, as I read the novel, because, among the other things which the novel gave to me, was the whole question of communication and how we communicate on multiple levels, whether it be Paul communicating by shedding a tear…that's an act of communication on a very profound level…to the Fremen, whether communication of the voice or communication by sword or communication by a dozen different ways that we all do constantly as we're doing in this room right now. See, you're communicating by the …in one sense by the way you're both watching me as I speak and watching Frank and watching the recorder and watching what you are doing with your hands. There are all sorts of communications, just as I'm communicating and you are in a dozen hundreds of hidden different ways. I had no problem with that in the novel and I thought that it was rather well done. Let me go off on another parenthesis here. Did you ever read the novel "Nostromo" by Conrad?

FH: No.

WM: I was reminded very much as I read "Dune" for the first time of the reaction that I had when I first read "Nostromo". I think that "Nostromo" is one of…if probably Conrad's greatest novel…it's certainly his most artistic achievement as well as his most profound…and I found myself thinking about "Nostromo" as I read "Dune".

FH: Now I'm going to have to read it. (Laughter)

WM: Well, I mean that's very high praise, because "Nostromo" is ultimately the creation of an entire universe. It is the country of Casteguana in Central America. There is one thing in Central…in this country of Casteguana that influences everybody, and it is the presence of a gigantic silver mine. And the silver corrupts everybody in the country in one way or another. It corrupts the British people who are running the silver mine; it corrupts the

incorruptible “Nostromo”, our man, who is the soft of a folk hero of the thing; it corrupts everybody; it totally controls the country; and in watching how these people interrelate to the problem of the silver mine and the parallels there, you see, between “Dune” and “Nostromo”, to me, as I read it as a Professor of English, were very strong. This is one of the things I object to in among my own compatriots…that they are unable to see that something like “Nostromo” is in a very real sense a type of science fiction. We have created a mythical country, based upon reality, where the people react in certain ways to things which we would react to in other ways. But it’s said over here, just as the Fremen react to…

FH: Oh, yes, it’s my contention that especially in “Dune”…and “Dune” is an exposition of this point that man himself is going to change. We have changed, but our changes…the actual basic change is a gradual climb. Now I don’t see this as progress, I see it as a sort of entropy and as a growth of complexity. But that this is such slow process…that in thousands upon thousands upon thousands of years we would still recognise the emotions, the reactions, all of these things and given any set of forces which you can delineate: the silver mine, the geriatric spice, the existence of certain hard lines of power control and communication…

WM: As perhaps oversimplified by, say, the Harkonnens versus the Atreides.

FH: Yes.

WM: Families…

FH: Yes. You have a classical feudal system here.

WM: Yes; sure.

FH: It’s my contention that feudalism is a natural condition of human beings…not that it is the *only* condition or not that it is the right condition…that it is just a way we have of falling into organisations. I like to use the example of the Berlin Museum Beavers. You ever come across this?

WM: No.

FH: Well my…the numbers are going to be wrong but it's on this order… Before World War II there were a number of families of beaver in the Berlin Museum. They were European beaver. They had been there, raised in captivity for something on the order of seventy beaver generations, in cages. World War II came along and a bomb freed some of them into the countryside. What did they do? They went out and they started building dams.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Wow! Wow!

FH: Now tribal organisation…feudalism is tribal organisation…

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: And that's what I'm talking about. So, tribal organisation is a natural organisation of humankind. We tend to fall into it, given any chance at all, given the proper stresses, or given the proper lack of stresses.

WM: And I think we could extrapolate from that notion and say we have many more feudal or tribal aspects in our society than we might have otherwise thought about. I think that the existence of the Roman Catholic Church in its feudal state as long as it has existed is sort of proof of what you're saying.

FH: The hippies are a proof of it.

WM: Yes.

FH: Look at the organisation they set up. It's a tribal organisation.

BH: A business office is feudal.

FH: Yes. A company is feudal.

BH: A university, perhaps?

WM: Oh, yes, indeed; an English department, very true!

ALL: (Laughter)

FH: Well, of course what we're doing here is oversimplifying.

WM: Yes.

FH: The complexities of it and the variations on the theme are multitude but the framework is there, the skeleton is there, and you can recognise that skeleton. So I set up the situation in "Dune" where the natural evolvement was a classic feudalism, and for a very specific purpose. I wanted the lines of power to be clear.

WM: Yes. At the same time, feudal lines of power were extremely complicated. I don't want to contradict you but it…

FH: No, I understand what you're saying. That's why I said…

WM: But, while they were simple, they were nonetheless multi-level, as you indicate with the Baron Harkonnen and the Na-Baron, and so on. All of these things of the relationship to the Imperium… this…you want to go back to the 14th…13th…14th century in England, of the war of the roses.

FH: No. By clear this, I meant in this sense recognisable by anybody who knows the first damn thing about history.

WM: Precisely. The fief has a set of obligations from top to bottom, bottom to top, mutual back and forth, ultimately.

FH: Yes. It's a feedback situation.

WM: Exactly. And this kind of thing, the kind of loyalty that, say, Gurney Halleck gave Paul, or gave Paul's father, this is the kind of thing you mean.

FH: The loyalty to the family.

WM: Yes, certainly, and "I am the rightful Duke of Atreides."

FH: Yes.

WM: At the very end of the thing, as he is speaking to Sardaukar… you pronounce it…

FH: The Sardaukar.

WM: Yes, very interesting.. I know my students had had a lot of fun tracing down the background of the Fremen as far back as they can from the hints you drop in the novel, and coming to their surprise, delighted surprise, that they were once probably on Salusa Secundus, and this accounts for part of the way they are, in the hardening there, and, further, the tracing of the life cycle of Shai-Hulud is really an interesting thing for them because you don't quite complete whole thing in your appendices.

FH: Of course, what have I set up there? We know our information about the cyclic nature…the interdependence in our own environment is quite sketchy in many areas, but we do know this… we know that you need…to create large bodies of sand, dust, whatnot, you need water action…some, anyway…so I've set up multitudes of creatures who substitute for this…quite logical…they do this. And I postulated that in one vector of their life circle, water is poison to them. We see this sort of thing on planet Earth right now where a creature can live in one environment, in one vector, but that environment will kill it in another vector. The anopheles mosquito is a good example. And it doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to carry this further in that classic science fiction way, saying that, given other circumstances on another planet, a creature could develop something that we could see was analogous to this and…but would do these other things…now, there's another element of Shai-Hulud too. Shai-Hulud serves a specific function among other things in the history, but a specific leitmotive function. It's the unthinking beast. It's the black beast. It's the personification of the bull in the arena…not the way the bull in the arena actually is, but the personification…

WM: The mystique of the black…

FH: The mystique of it…and it's…there it is.

WM: I never took…the black beast has connotations that I never gave it. Maybe it's my taking it wrong from your terminology. It's the mythical beast. It's the archetypal beast…is that what you're talking about? Is that what you mean by black beast?

FH: The archetypal beast…that's right. Now I bring this up because of something you're mentioning earlier, tracing the archetypal background.

WM: Yes.

FH: And I made it, classically, the archetypal black beast, the one who lives underground in the cavern, with the gold.

WM: I see. OK., right. Well, this is the dragon of Beowulf, who lives in the cave.

FH: Yes.

WM: Guarding the gold.

FH: With the golden dagger.

WM: Right; precisely. Incidentally, L. Frank Baum used this is one of his Oz books…used the dragon guard hoarding the gold, guarding gold, believe it or not.

FH: Well, this…that is why I put this in there. It's a familiar…

WM: And gold, of course, becomes the geriatric spice.

FH: That's right.

WM: In other sense.

FH: Yes.

WM: Which I once figured out…one of my students figured out that the geriatric spice itself is probably the defecated matter of Shai-Hulud…

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: …in one of its vectors, or it might have been…no, not…not the defecated matter at all, so…no, no, it was the eggs, perhaps, and that's why they're guarded, among other things.

BH: The valley of bat-guano.

WM: Yes; oh, true. They have lots of…you know, kids have lots of fun with this.

FH: Of course. The…yes, and…and I did that deliberately. The…the value of a good story in the entertainment sense is how much of this it tips off…how much it starts rolling.

WM: Sure.

FH: So that you start creating your own story, the one that's in all of us, you see.

WM: And in that sense there is no right answer to the final…let's say, the complete life cycle of Shai-Hulud.

FH: Yes. Do you want me to pin it down for you? I can. I mean, I had it in mind…

WM: You had it in mind?

FH: Yes, but…

WM: I had it worked our, too. Let's…let's compare notes.

FH: Well, I'd be interested, before I saw anything…I…to hear what you have to say.

WM: I got to get my book. I'm going to turn this off for a minute… (tape pause)…

WM: well, we're back again. We're talking about the archetypal patterns in "Dune" for a minute…off on *this* tangent now…

FH: Well, we got on to the sequel for a while.

WM: Yes.

FH: And there's a point here that I think should be made. Campbell turned down the sequel. Now his argument was that I had created an anti-hero in Paul in the sequel, and he has built his magazine… I'm…'I'm oversimplifying…grossly oversimplifying.

WM: Sure.

FH: But this is the essence of it really and truthfully accurate…

WM: Yes.

FH: That he had built his magazine on the hero. Now it's my contention that the difference between a hero and an anti-hero is where you stop the story, and if you're true to life, if you're true to life, giving these ingredients, then the story goes on, because human beings go on. Now, you can confine your story to one individual, and therefore as far as he's concerned the story begins with birth and ends with death. But if you're dealing with larger movements…

WM: The parameters are much broader.

FH: That's rihgt…as they are in this book.

WM: Yes.

FH: Then there is no real ending. It's just the place where you stop the story. And one of the reasons, by the way, why in the book "Dune" I stop it the way I do, deliberately building up a carrying momentum, as though you were going down a slide and then just chopping it…

WM: To a moment of triumph and than that's it…

FH: And then you skid out of the story with all of this clinging to you.

WM: Yes. I can see that. Yes. But as I understand the Jungian archetypal patterns, you know, the Lord Raglan steps of the hero… why, "Dune" takes up about the first fifteen of them, more or less, and if…I know nothing about the sequel other than the few words you've told me, but I would be willing to predict that it you follow the pattern, the archetypal hero pattern, he goes through many of the things that Lord Raglan sets out in the notion of the hero and the quest hero. Ultimately, some…Paul has to die. It's just a question of how and under what circumstances, and probably as a result of some of these tensions which have been previously operating.

FH: Yes, several of them, and one of them, of course, is the tension of prognostication.

WM: Yes.

FH: Prediction.

WM: This is foreshadowed in here.

FH: Yes.

WM: He never sees his own death moment, but he's always concerned about it.

FH: Yes. We bring this…yes, that's right…we bring this to a head, this idea that I'm expounding: that…you know…when you talk to any of the average individual and he says, "Oh, if I could only know everything that's going to happen tomorrow, wouldn't that be wonderful?"

WM: Oh, sure.

FH: What he is talking about if the fifth race of High Alia.

WM: Yes, or will that girl say yes or no? (Laughter)

FH: That's right. That's what he's talking about, and he doesn't really want to know everything that's going to happen tomorrow because this is precisely what I do to Paul. We carry this to its logical outcome and reach a point in the sequel where he is physically blinded…is without sight…I think this is what set Campbell off, the fact…

WM: Oh, here comes an anti-hero and that's…that's…yes.

FH: Yes. But he…here is Paul. He's physically blinded and yet he knows everything…*everything*…that's going to happen. He's lived this one before. Think of how boring that is but think of how mysterious and terrifying…

WM: That it would be to everybody else. Yes, sure.

FH: A guy…it would be as though I without sight, you see; I had nothing but a couple of sockets here, and my comes in and picks up a cigarette out of a package…I lean over and light it for her.

WM: And say it's a Pall Mall.

FH: Yes, and say "Oh, you're back to Pall Mall's."

WM: Yes.

FH: Paul does such things as grabbing a microphone out of a trooper's hand and relaying orders immediately after the accident in which his eyes are lost…and greeting people in the hallway as he passes them. The…of course it builds up this terrifying god head among the people around him, but it also foreshadows their turning against him, because if a person really does this sort of thing to you, you're going to get away from him one way or another.

WM: They crucify him.

FH: Yes.

WM: In many ways they would. I-I can see this and this would lead us to all sorts of possible symbolic interpretations of knowledge, and so going back to the Oedipal notion.

FH: Now…yes… It is my contention, of course…

WM: And I've always wondered about the Oedipal aspects of the novel.

FH: Oh, they're there.

WM: But let's not go into that right now. (Laughter.)

FH: They're there and deliberately.

WM: Yes.

FH: The…no…it's my contention…I think I'm probably right on this…that the thing that got to Campbell was not that I had an anti-hero in this sense, but that I had destroyed one of his gods.

WM: Oh.

FH: See…because the prediction and ESP.

WM: Oh, of course! With Campbell that's…you know…obviously!

FH: Yes.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, if you know the magazine and his editorials.

WM: Yes, sure. I've been reading it since 1940.

FH: All right. The you know that he is completely devoted to this idea, and I'm not…I'm not arguing against him, but I'm merely saying that this is his point of view, and this pokes a great deal of fun at…not so much fun as it pokes a big hole in the whole theory that…

WM: That's…yes.

FH: That it would be great to know everything that's going to happen tomorrow.

WM: And so he rejected it, huh?

FH: Yes. So he rejected it.

WM: Isn't that interesting?

FH: But *Galaxy* snapped it right up and paid Campbell's rates.

WM: Huh! Well, well, well, well. Looking for another Nebula for that one? (Laughter)

FH: I don't know. I didn't even look for a Nebula for the fist one…I didn't write it with that in mind.

WM: Uh-huh.

FH: My chief concern is to tell a good story. It really is.

WM: Virginia Heinlein says that every time that Bob wanders away she says, “Cut to the chase.”

ALL: (Laughter)

FH: Yes. I heard him say that. (Cough) That’s the classic Hollywood approach.

WM: Yes. Oh, could we go back a little bit and…tell us more about the novel as it developed in your mind.

FH: Well, you were going to do something.

WM: Oh, I was going to trace Shai-Hulud for you. Well, I can’t quite do it completely without referring to the text and I'm afraid that most of it is given in the text, but I think that the question of the sand trout and the…

FH: That's right.

WM: Is one of the vectors from the sand trout to the dry leathery, to the sand trout…no…dry leathery thing…sand trout…to little maker…to…a…

FH: To the big…to the worm…to the big one.

WM: To the…yes…well…but it…it goes through…does little maker just go directly into the worm, or is there another…

FH: No, that's…it goes directly into the worm.

WM: Goes directly into the worm.

FH: It's a matter of growth process.

WM: All right. To the…to Shai-Hulud itself, and then Shai-Hulud spice, I think, becomes the eggs.

FH: Well, the spice, as I conceived it…

WM: Spermatic material…

FH: The spice as I conceived it was necessary for the development

from, let's say, the pupal stage.

WM: Yes.

FH: For him to go beyond the pupal stage, they had to have to be in the presence of the spice. That's the way I conceived it.

WM: I see.

FH: That's why it's so…

WM: I think the spice itself is almost, as being spermatic material.

FH: That's right. That's exactly right.

WM: And then there's spice growing into the…well, ultimately the little maker.

FH: Uh-huh.

WM: As I saw it.

BH: Is that something like royal honey, royal nectar?

FH: No, the way I saw it is slightly different but…the spice in the presence of a…of a dead…worm.

WM: Oh yes. Killed by the water of life. Then this becomes…and you're off in the spice below.

FH: That's right. This becomes the…the seed of the new life cycle.

WM: Ok. Yes. It's almost orgasmic in that sense.

FH: That's right. Yes.

WM: Probably deliberately so.

FH: Yes. I built these things in there deliberately, all the way through it.

WM: Yes. How interesting. Well, if we can go back then and talk about…a little bit more about the formation of the novel from say

1953 in the germinal ideas and your file folders and so on…we were up to about there a little while…while ago.

FH: Well I'm not too clear…

WM: On dates…

FH: Dates. They…they don't concern me.

WM: No.

FH: I-I'm more involved with the actual piece of paper in front of me.

WM: All right. How long…how long a writing process did this take then from the time this began 'til the…say…the time you…

FH: You mean, the actual physical writing process?

WM: U-huh.

FH: About two years.

WM: About two years, and you wrote it when you were in Mexico?

FH: No.

WM: Oh.

FH: I wrote it here.

WM: Wrote it here.

FH: U-huh. But I had the idea with me in Mexico…was adding to it, you see. We're talking about two different things here, the accumulation of data…

WM: Data and the physical writing process.

FH: And the physical sitting down in front of the paper and actually putting the story down. It's almost as though you're filling a container.

WM: I see. That has been pretty well built up at that time…

FH: Yes.

WM: It's interesting…Harry Harrison describes the writing process with him rather well in a tape I made with him a few months ago. He is absolutely uninterruptible from, say, 12:30 in the afternoon 'til 5:00 at night, because the ideas as they form in his mind sort of becomes extensions of his (Cough) excuse me, fingers in his typewriter and that they are up here and that …that any interruption, whether it be a telephone ringing or his wife knocking at the door or anything at all is liable to shatter that idea as it transforms itself into paper.

FH: This is a very evanescent thing and I have to fight this, but Bev is very nice to me about this. She keeps the…

BH: A writer's children are always…they learn to tiptoe, and "Is daddy writing?" In fact, you don't have to say be quiet. You say your father is writing and…silence.

WM: What is your writing schedule?

FH: Well, it varies…depends on what I'm doing…writing for the magazine…but as a general rule it goes like this: I'll get home somewhere around five o'clock when Bev is here, when she's not working as she has been the last couple of weeks. She'll have dinner ready at that time or very close to that time. I'll then take an hour's nap and then work sometimes until one o'clock in the morning. Then I hit the sack and get up and sometimes if a story is strong in mde I get up in the morning and write…get up at five o'clock in the morning or so and write for an hour or two sometimes before going down to San Francisco.

WM: Yes.

FH: And this is the thing I want to get out of because I can write eight hours a day in two bursts and I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be doing what I want…writing what I want to write during those times. I don't envision supporting myself entirely by science fiction writing in the sense of writing only science fiction,

because I have other axes to grind, too.

WM: Yes.

FH: I'm going to do a nonfiction book on air pollution, for example. I'm really hipped on this ecology thing…the consequence of some of the things that we're doing to our planet. And I don't mean in the lock-it-up-and-throw-it-away sense of the classic conservationalist… in other words, turn it all into wilderness. I don't mean that, but there are ways of living with our planet and not against it and this is the attitude that we have to develop, and it is an attitude…

WM: Thank you, Mr. Kynes. (Laughter) Pardot Kynes.

FH: But it is an attitude.

WM: Sure.

FH: It…it's something that has to be ingrained into us as children.

WM: As my wife is fond of telling my children, a fountain pen is not a screw driver.

FH: Very good. (Laughter)

WM: And each has its own purpose for whatever it may be and… and if you misuse that thing it will turn around and bite you. Youl'll ruin a screw driver or ruin a fountain pen in trying to make it work like a screw driver, and we're rapidly ruining our air, our water, our planet, if you will.

FH: I found that…you were talking about the economics of writing and selling…"Dune" has made…made us at this point about $ 15.000 since the first sale.

WM: This includes the sale of…what was it…something like eight chapters to Campbell?

FH: That's right.

WM: By the way, I did not read it in analog. I read it first in book form. How much of it did appear in…

FH: Almost all of it.

WM: Almost all of it.

FH: U-huh. In fact, in one sense, a little more, because there were capsule recapitulations, the synopses at the beginning.

WM: Oh, yes. Did you write those?

FH: Yes, I did. The…the way it comes in…I've found…and this is broad for a novel…it makes somewhere between five and seven thousand dollars on the…in the first twelve months of sale, and this depends on how far you sell it, how many times you sell it. Then I found that with my own work it'll go on earning for a long time. We received several hundred dollars out of "Dragon In The Sea" that…last year.

WM: Is that right?

FH: Yes. The old dragon.

WM: Yes. It's still one of my favourites. Still one of my favourites.

FH: Well, it's still selling. Selling beautifully in Japan.

WM: I understand that you speak Japanese?

FH: No.

WM: No? Where did I hear that?

FH: No, I-I don't speak Japanese. I can read a bit of idiogram.

WM: *Ah so desu ka.*

FH: *Ah so desu ka.* (Laughter) But I was raised with Japanese Americans in the Pacific Northwest in an area where there were a great many of them, let's put it that way.

WM: Yes.

FH: A place called Fife between Seattle and Tacoma and…

WM: That's up near glorious Tunwater. (Laughter)

FH: Yes, it's north of Tunwater. (Laughter) Ah, an Oly fan…if I'd known, I would have brought in a mess of beer. By the way, we have another wine in there. Would you like…?

WM: No, I'm going to stick to coffee for a while, thanks. I'll be up all night reading, but then, what difference does it make.

FH: Well, anyway, I was raised with them, and eat in Japanese and I know a few phrases.

WM: Yes. I learned quite a…(tape paused)…

WM: … well, you were speaking of your writing plans for the future. You say the sequel to "Dune" will be out this fall sometime?

FH: Or earlier.

WM: Or earlier.

FH: Possibly in October, possibly earlier. There's some question of I requested that it be moved up a bit and I'm not sure that everyone's in agreement and maybe that's best…I mean I'm not…

WM: Yes.

FH: I just thought it would be a better idea for several reasons to publish it earlier. One of the reasons is that I have built a Dune Tarot into the sequel.

WM: Do that one again?

FH: You know what the Tarot deck is?

WM: Oh, of course, yes.

FH: Ok.

WM: Oh, I've missed that.

FH: I built a Dune Tarot into it and it's hot right now.

WM: Yes.

FH: And I was just thinking economically they ought to capitalize on it.

WM: Oh, sure, why not. A Dune Tarot. Well. See, I teach Yeats and Eliot and so on…

FH: Of course, yes.

WM: In fact, I-I own my own private deck.

FH: Yes. WE have one. It's my contention that if you immerse a society in a great deal of what we call fortune telling, you know, that you cloud the whole process…you see what happened in classic times in Greek myth…historic times, when the oracle was…had terrifying accuracy.

WM: The Oedipus cycle for example.

FH: There weren't a lot of oracles around. You went to Delphi.

WM: Delphi, right.

FH: Or to the local madman.

WM: Yes. Look at the birds and cast a few auguries here and there.

FH: Yes. Who might have…might kill a chicken and look at the entrails.

WM: Or note which way the blood spurts.

FH: That's right. Any one of these methods, which I call ignition principles as far as prediction is concerned. You see, I contend that there is such a thing…that you can do it, whether you do it by a subliminal thing…*petit perception*, or whether it is a…

WM: You use the *petit perception* in that scene in the conservatory, incidentally. I thought it was rather well done. With…Countess… Fenring?

FH: That's right.

WM: Leaving that thing for Lady Jessica to pick up, end parenthesis.

FH: Yes, that's right. That's…well, whether our predictive faculties are prophecy…and we've had our prophets…is a product of an accumulation of…in a sense of a computer is accumulating data.

WM: Yes.

FH: Or something mystical in a sense that it is unexplained thus far…unexplained…I'm looking at it through Western eyes now as you'll undoubtedly see…that…that it is a mechanical scientific principle and if you get enough data to bear on it, you'll understand it. Now this doesn't necessarily follow, of course, that we can understand everything in the universe. Ask me about…what is the basic about what I think is the basic fallacy in science.

WM: All right. What is the basic fallacy in science, tell us, pray tell! (Laughter)

FH: You want a prognostication. Ok. You know, I think…I think it's the idea that we can invent… that of course, science fiction is based on this…the idea that…that we can invent anything we imagine, and having invented it, we must use it…

WM: And then live by the consequences of it.

FH: Exactly. Yes. Now, this is the Western…see, this is the Western fallacy.

WM: And this is one of the great things about the east…that it does not…

FH: Yes, of course we frown on it because the achieve their ignition by…by methods that we can see are hogwash.

WM: Right. And…or we misinterpret their methods, for example… if we were to consider, say, the tantric yoga, all we would think of is that they're achieving nirvana by means of sex, and it's much more than that.

FH: Yes.

WM: Or, as…as one specific example, we…we take only one aspect of it, and make sort of an end out of it…

FH: Or, hell, then you go back to the…the slitting the neck of the chicken and watching which direction the blood spurts.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, you see…what I'm saying about ignition.

WM: U-huh.

FH: This ignites the…you see, you have to have confidence that you can do it…you have to believe you can do it, and believing you can do it, the process is ignited by any one of a million methods. We've experimented with many…the direction the birds fly or any of this, you see.

WM: Well, I had a student a few years ago who…whose wife was so accurate with the Tarot deck that…that she stopped using it completely.

FH: I must tell you something.

WM: She frightened herself.

FH: I terrified a gal one time in a weird…I was about seventeen. We were sitting in her aunt's house and her aunt and an uncle were out of sight, but within hearing distance, down in some stacks in their library. It was nearby and we were sitting across the…from each other on hassocks, the mouth of the fireplace, a big stone fireplace, between us, down to embers. We'd been out on a date, and I brought her home. We didn't have anything going…we…she was just a gal I knew. I happened to have had a crush on her younger sister, and she knew it, and…ah, unrequited love at seventeen is hideous thing.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Oh, yes!

FH: Anyway, that was a…it was great upsurge of Rhine consciousness at the time.

WM: Yes.

FH: Predicting the cards…of course, our interpretation of predicting the cards, was, you know…we had only one kind of cards, that was a deck of cards.

WM: Sure.

FH: So she broke out a brand new deck of cards and shuffled them. We'd been talking about it on the way home and…quite shadowy in the room…there was the firelight and Pat was sitting across the fireplace and the light from where.…her aunt and uncle were playing cribbage in the back in there, both of them deaf, by the way… you hear this (Falsetto) Fifteen two and two is four (Laughter). Counting…

WM: (Falsetto) A pair of sex.

FH: Yes, that's right. So there was a light from back in there and so she could see the cards, and she said, see if you can predict the cards. And she had been shuffling them, so she picked up the first card, and I closed my eyes, and I *saw* that card. And so I told her… that was it. She put it down. That was the card. I swear to you, Will, I went through that entire deck, predicting every card that she was going to see, and there wasn't a failure at all. I told her every card. I did it the same every time. Now, whether I saw a reflection in her eyes…in other words, we'll go back to *petit perception*.

WM: Yes.

FH: Or whether this was some actual keyed-in transmission. We were sympatico or something…

WM: Tuned in on her wavelength.

FH: Empathy or what is rampid to this atmosphere…I don't know what it was, but I predicted what the cards were, and I said "My goodness," I said, "This is fascinating! Let's do it again. Show them to me again." So she shuffled the deck again, and cut them a few

times, and we started going through them again. And we got down to, oh, five or six cards in the deck, and suddenly she threw the whole deck down on the hearth of the fireplace and said, “This scares me! I don’t want to do this any more!”

WM: Hmmmmm. Have you ever had that kind of success…

FH: Never. Never again. But it was a…the odds against being able to do this by anything but some unrecognized…

WM: Force.

FH: Contact or force…I’m not ruling out the fact that I may have seen…she wasn’t wearing glasses, but the light may have been such that, without even recognizing it, I saw them or reflection of them in her eyes, or something of that nature. This is possible.

WM: There are more things ‘twixt heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of…

FH: Oh. Oh, Will! (Laughter)

WM: Why are you laughing? You expect things like that from an English teacher don’t you? (Laughter)

BH: Not frequently…(tape paused)…

WM: I’d like to ask you a couple of more questions (Cough). I wanted to talk about some of the religious constructs behind the novel. It’s obvious that some of the Arabian mystique is there, and I think that any perceptive reader can pick this up, but part of the question relates to the identity of Paul as an avatar, as a new messiah.

FH: That’s right.

WM: Or as a new prophet or what you will. Would you care to talk about that a little?

FH: Well, one of the threads in the story is to trace a possible way a messiah is created in our society, and I hope I was successful in making it believable. Here we have the entire process, or at least

the large and some of the subtle elements of the construction of this, both from the individual standpoint, and from the way society demands this of you. It's the references in there, you know, that the man must recognize the myth he is living in, because the creation of an avatar is a mythmaking process. We've done it in our…in recent times. Look at what's happening to John F. Kennedy.

WM: O, sure.

FH: Who was a very earthy, real, and not totally holy man…so here we have a likeable person, now, you see…

WM: Yes.

FH: But real in the flesh and blood sense who by the process of emulation becomes something larger than life, far larger than life, and I've just explored all of as many permutations as I could recognize in the process.

WM: Oh, I-I caught overtones of Lawrence of Arabia in the thing, for example.

FH: He could very well become an avatar for the…for the Arabs.

WM: Right.

FH: If Lawrence of Arabia had died at the crucial moment of the British…

WM: Say, when Allenby walked into Jerusalem.

FH: Yes. If he had died…if, for example, he had gone up and killed the people who were destroying his dream, walked into that conference and said, Gentlemen, I have here under my javala a surprise, Bang! Bang! Bang! and he had been killed…

WM: He'd have been deified.

FH: He would have been deified. And it would have been the most terrifying thing the British had ever encountered, because the Arabs would have swept that entire peninsula with that sort of force, because one of the things we've done in our society is exploited this

power…Western man has exploited this avatar power.

WM: Well, if I could ask then one more question along this same line, you mentioned a little bit earlier that you studied comparative religion at one time.

FH: That's right.

WM: A student of it…was it from your experiencing reading comparative religions that brought you to this particular notion of an avatar?

FH: That was part of it. Of course, it was ignited by the idea of…by the ideas I encountered in reading about desert societies, and I think that the idea of the way Western society has exploited this force. We have, you know…

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: We've used it as…quite consciously we've sent out our missionaries to do our dirty work for us…then come along behind them with the certain belief that we're right in anything we do, because God has told us so…God in the person of the avatar.

WM: Well, one last personal question, then, if…one last personal question, then, if you don't mind. Do you profess any specific religion yourself? You mentioned vendetta earlier or other backgrounds. I'm a little curious…if it's not at all pertinent, why say so.

FH: Oh, I don't mind saying so. I mean it…I don't really profess a religion in the sense that we normally recognize religion I believe in more in self development in the Zen sense.

WM: Well, I caught those Zen elements from time to time, I thought, in…in "Dune", and in fact, the whole Zensunni school line thought was an aspect of that…

FH: You know, don't you, that one element of the construction of this book…it's all the way through there…that I wrote certain parts of it in haiku and other poetical forms, and then expanded them to prose to create a pace.

WM: I hadn't picked those out specifically, but I sort of caught something of that, and that's

FH: Some of my friend have come back to me with examples out of it and said, was this a…

WM: Haiku.

FH: Was this a haiku?

WM: Or a tanka, or something…

FH: Yes, or a tanka, and yes they're in there…

WM: Very good. And thank you very much. We certainly appreciate this.

The Ecology of Survival

by Ed Leimbacher,
Fusion Magazine #34, 1970

The two most influential fantasy writers are more than likely Robert Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke. Just a notch below them in terms of recognition and acceptance among the current audience is Frank Herbert, who in Dune*, and* Dune Messiah*, has given us a book-world of scope and event. Both are episodic semi-Biblical narratives of exciting incident and intriguing possibility. Herbert's works, in and out of books, has much the same feel.*

"We haven't learned to live *with* our world yet—just on it. We tend to act before thinking out the whole chain of consequences. That's the real test of an ecologist—that he understands all the real consequences."

The speaker is Frank Herbert. Newspaper-man, photographer, family man, author of renowned under/above-ground classic *Dune* (plus 15-20 other fiction novels as well). Herbert knows whereof he speaks: among a whole host of subjects. *Dune* is most of all a book about ecology—about survival in an alien environment; about man remaking the whole surface of a planet; about deeper reverence for all the myriad forms of life. It just may be that *Dune* and planetary ecologist/sci-fi novelist Herbert can tell us something about our own beleaguered world of the Seventies.

America's trip may be conspicuous consumption and ridiculous waste, but on the planet Dune the people use and *re*-use everything carefully and wisely as well. Michelangelo Antonioni may visit Death Valley and come away empty-handed, but Frank Herbert invents a world of Death Valleys—of awesome deserts, sand-churning monster worms, and harsh Fremen existing in their midst—and in so doing creates one of the most splendid imagined universes, and the best novels, science fiction or otherwise, of this century.

For *Dune*, coupled with its recently published continuation, *Dune*

Messiah, is an extraordinary piece of work. Multi-layered, multi-faceted, the novel simultaneously combines fantastic adventure, complex characterization, dense literate style, metaphysic and psychic investigation, economic speculation, messianic psychology and of course ecological awareness and invention.

The novel's origins are deceptively simple. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service were running a test station among the dunes on the Oregon Coast," says Herbert. "This was back in the mid-Fifties. They were developing ways to control sand dunes, and the program was so successful that people from Israel, Algeria, Chile and other nations were there to see how they did it."

"I went there to do a magazine article about the program—in the course of the visit I got this flaming idea in my head: what would it be like on an entire planet like the most severe of our deserts? What would go into the eco-systems on a planet like that?"

That was the beginning. But, Herbert goes on, "Concurrently I'd been thinking about the origins of the messiah myths in our society and others. I saw that as a motif to run through this non-existent novel, because a good story is more about people that things. I just began doing what I always do for a story—collecting folders of information. It was probably six or seven years before I actually began putting words down on paper."

By 1963 when Herbert completed *Dune,* his novel had grown to more than 500 pages. One publisher rejected it as too long, but John W. Campbell at *Fantasy* knew a major property when he saw it: his magazine ran *Dune* in two three-part segments in 1964. Chilton's hardcover edition appeared that winter, and the Ace paperback in 1965.

There has been no looking back since. Winning both the Hugo and Nebula awards for best science-fiction novel of the year, *Dune* gradually gained a word-of-mouth reputation among hip people as well. Now, says the author, there are way over 300,000 copies in print, and many campus-area bookstores can't keep the book in stock.

"I presupposed a dialectic or a growth pattern," says the author,

“birth, death, regeneration—and I deliberately wanted that poignancy of looking back in good times, in *Dune Messiah*. You see, the whole *Dune* sequence is written in layers—it’s plotted in depth as well as in a linear direction. The action, the lyric poetry, the metaphysical, psychological and ecological, they’re all deliberately layered in.”

“In many respects,” he goes on, “it was a gamble on my part. I didn’t know if that sort of layering would make it’s point with the American reading public, because it’s not seen much in science fiction. So I get a great deal of pleasure out of the fact that people are actually enjoying *Dune*. I’m happy to have done it. But it’s like a pool shark who says: ‘Six ball in the corner pocket.’ To tell you the truth, I wasn’t sure that the cue ball wouldn’t go right in after it.”

A long-time resident of the Bay Area, Frank Herbert now lives in Seattle, on the top floor of an old mansion—presently subdivided into several apartments—on Queen Ann Hill overlooking the ferryboats and the chilly waters of the Sound.

“I’m really a native of this area,” he explains, “and I was missing it. There are things you can do here with a small expenditure of time that take a great expenditure down south. Up here I can be in the wilderness in an hour. In terms of relative degradation of the environment. Seattle’s getting there—but is it’s as much better than San Francisco as San Francisco is than Los Angeles.”

Seated in his living room, Herbert talks about his life and his won vision, looming beyond him are several ceiling-high bookcases, packed for the most part with non-fiction reading, including whole shelves devoted to desert ecology volumes with titles like *Arabia Felix*, *The Land of Gilead*, and *Black Land, Black Land*.

“I was born in Tacoma,” he says, “and raised in and around Puget Sound. My father had several different businesses, but he lost a fortune in the Depression. In 1928, for example, in the the heyday of dance halls, he built a Spanish Castle down in the Highline.” (Rock history footnote: during the Fifties and into the early Sixties, Spanish Castle—located about midway between Seattle and Tacoma on Highway 99—was the biggest Rock’n’Roll emporium, a young black later known as Jimi Hendrix used to make it to the Spanish

Castle on Saturday nights to watch such outasite Northwest groups as the *Wailers* and *Little Bill and the Blue Notes*. Remember "Spanish Castle Magic" on *Axis: Bold as Love?*)

"I went to the University of Washington", says Herbert. "I met my wife there at a writing class. But I dropped out of the U because they wouldn't let me do what I wanted, which was to cross department lines. To hell with requirements. I didn't want a degree —all I wanted was to pick and choose courses, like in a cafeteria line."

Like every other writer you've ever read about Herbert's done the fascinating ways of earning a living routine, his book jacket bio lists "lay analyst" and "oyster driver" among several others. But for more that 30 years most often he's been a newspaperman, nowadays for love rather than money. Herbert works as Higher Education Editor for Seattle's Hearst newspaper, the *Post Intelligencer*.

"The successful writer mystique carries on over into the job. It gives me the leverage to say to the *P-I*, 'This is the kind of newspapering I want to do.' Newspaper works keeps you right on the edge of what's going on—it sensitizes you to current change. I do things as a newsman," Herbert adds, "that I know damn well I wouldn't be doing at my typewriter."

There's a short break for strong, dark tea served by Herbert's wife Bev. During the pause she also exhibits his major awards for *Dune*, the Hugos is a polished silver rocket, the Nebula, a crystal cube with a glittering, seemingly swirling galaxy floating within. Comments the author, "The Hugo is kind of a fan award, and it means more at the box office. But the Nebula represents a mail-poll of fellow craftsmen, the Science Fiction Writers of America."

At 49, Herbert looks considerably younger: short, stocky, barrel chested, with crewcut fair hair and a greying, reddish beard, his mustache juts pugnaciously and his blue eyes twinkle just enough to make you think of an old-fashioned fishing-boat skipper or a good-natured anarchist. He gestures a lot when he talks and that starts now, as Herbert warms to the tea and the subject:

“We science fictionists are pragmatic idealists,” he says. “Our stories are usually anchored in something that’s going on right now—given this: what-if… We create whole worlds that are sort of caricatures of the existing thing, and we use them to throw the present scene into bas belief.”

Surely *Dune* fits into that category?

“I’m damn hipped on this environment thing,” answers Herbert. “I don’t think we should ignore the legislative approach, but I don’t really believe we can solve it legally. I’d feel better if something like the churches were involved instead of some government agency—I try to get to those soft spots and apply leverage. That’s one reason I accepted this *P-I* job: it puts me in direct contact with university level people. If we’re going to solve all these environment problems, it’s going to take strong action from that segment of the populace. That’s what I mean about applying leverage to the system.”

Herbert doesn’t really belong to any citizens’ environmental groups, but he is one of about a thousand steam-engine car owners in the country. He explains, “There’s no name to out organizations, no by-laws, no dues. Every member is a bishop and can swear in as many members as he likes. All you have to do is to raise your right hand and swear. ‘Never again will I buy new internal combustion engine.’ If we put enough of this kind of pressure on Detroit, they’ll solve the auto pollution problem for us.”

“Same thing with gasoline. We’ve got to stop buying tetraethyl lead in our gasoline. But for now the Ethyl Corporation’s got us by the balls—while the sky becomes more and more of a sewer.”

Herbert picks up an orange and holds it out dramatically. “If you take this and paint it with shellac, that thin coat of shellac is the equivalent of our atmosphere. And there is no cleansing process built into it…”

“Our ecologists say we’re only twenty years away from irreversible effects on the environment,” he goes on. “But it could happen a lot sooner than that. Wreck just one tanker carrying defoliants to Vietnam and you destroy seventy percent of the bio-systems on the surface of the ocean—and most of our oxygen renewal depends on

the oceans. If one jerk in the Pentagon can put the whole population of earth in peril, that means the government's power is all askew—it clearly shouldn't be in the hands of those who've demonstrated they keep making the same mistakes again and again."

"Or take those Rhine River time bombs of DDT. We've really got time bombs like that all around us—if one of them finally rusts through, we've got a biological disaster."

Herbert frowns, then adds, "Underlying all these things we're talking about is the idea that we can invent a better world." Think of the ecological and philosophical texture of *Dune* and you'll understand that Frank Herbert is talking to himself, too, when he concludes glumly: "That could be fiction…"

So far there's not much in the environment of the Seventies to be optimistic about. But perhaps the world will muddle through. Merely by its existence—but especially as its number of readers grow—the science fiction masterpiece *Dune* suggests the small but hopeful possibility that man *can* learn from his ecological mistakes. I'd rather believe the author of *Dune* when he writes, in that rich, exciting, wondrously beatify novel, "Life—all life—is in the service of life."

Vertex Interviews Frank Herbert

Interviewer: Paul Turner
October 1973

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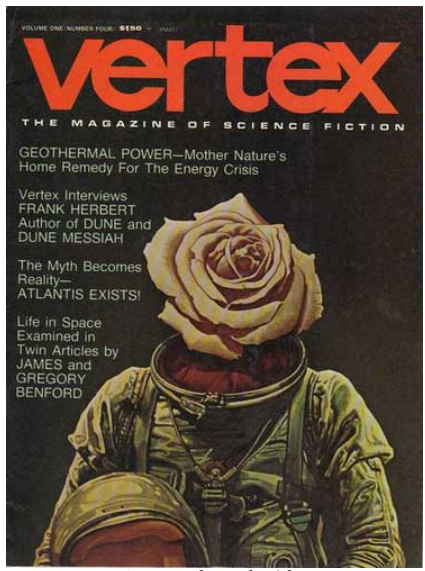
vertex
THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION
GEOTHERMAL POWER—Mother Nature's Home Remedy For The Energy Crisis
Vertex Interviews FRANK HERBERT Author of DUNE and DUNE MESSIAH
The Myth Becomes Reality— ATLANTIS EXISTS!
Life in Space Examined in Twin Articles by JAMES and GREGORY BENFORD
Cover art by Josh Kirby

VERTEX: What got you started in science fiction?

VERTEX: Had you been reading science fiction before that?

HERBERT: Well, I didn't cut my teeth on science fiction. I began reading science fiction, I would guess, in the forties, the early forties. I'd been reading science fiction about ten years before I decided to write it.

VERTEX: Who were your favorite authors?

HERBERT: Well, I did read some Heinlein. I shouldn't really tie it down to ten years because I had read H. G. Wells. I'd read Vance, Jack Vance, and I became acquainted with Jack Vance about that time. Jack came along about six months or so after I'd decided to

write science fiction. I heard he was in the area where I was living, and just walked in on him one day. We wound up, about six months later, our two families, going to Mexico. We lived in Mexico for a while and plotted several stories together. We're still very close friends. I read Poul Anderson. You know, we could list names here for a long while. I read the field when I started writing it. I wanted to see what was being done.

VERTEX: What were you doing at the time you started writing science fiction?

HERBERT: I was a newspaper editor, but I was also writing fiction. I was writing short stories. I decided very early I was going to write fiction. I came down to my birthday breakfast on my eighth birthday and announced, formally and portentously, to my family that I was going to be an author. My mother still treasures several hand-scribbled, badly misspelled, early eight-year-old attempts at fiction. One of them doesn't have a bad lead on it. Even now I can appreciate that I had the sense to put a narrative hook on the beginning of a story, even at age eight.

VERTEX: Dune is probably your most well-known science fiction novel.

HERBERT: Yes.

VERTEX: What caused you to write Dune?

HERBERT: Well, I had been nurturing the idea to write a treatment of the messianic impulse in human society for a long while, and my technique is to collect material. I collect file folders of material. A character idea interests me, and I put that in a folder appropriately labeled. Along the way I went to Florence, Oregon, to do an article about the U. S. Department of Agriculture's test station there, on the control of sand dunes. The U. S. pioneered in the control of sand dunes by planting specially developed grasses and other plants to hold a dune in the wind. You see, a sand dune is just a kind of fluid, only it takes longer for it to move. It creates waves that, when you see them from the air, are analogous to waves in a sea.

VERTEX: A slow-motion sea.

HERBERT: Yes, that's right. So, I did this magazine article and I started collecting material on the control of sand dunes. That lead me into ecological matters what we were doing to the planet. One day I woke up to the fact that I had a filing drawer full and that I just couldn't do anything else but write that book. So I sat down and I plotted a much longer work than Dune.

VERTEX: Dune is a pretty long work to begin with.

HERBERT: I know! It was much longer. I cut it up into three parts, and held out more than a third of it for the first book. I sat down and took about a year and a half putting it together, writing it. My reports from the New York market were very poor and my treatment by some of the publishers back there was just outrageous. Then I went back, even before I knew that Dune was being so successful, and wrote Dune Messiah, which was planned as a pivotal book, pointing both backward and forward, because I had a long range concept of the treatment of this messianic impulse in human society. I'm at work on the third and last one, which will probably turn out to be as long as Dune. How soon I can finish it, I don't know, because life and other immediate and urgent jobs keep intruding. But I'll get to it and I'll get it out, probably this year.

VERTEX: Do you have a title for it?

HERBERT: No. I have a working title, but I try not to talk about work in progress. My advice to any writer is not to use the energies of creation in talking about what he's working on; put it into the typewriter. You use the same energies to talk about your work that you use to write it. So I'm very cagey on these things, very secretive, and I hold all this back and then when I sit down at the typewriter it sort of pours out.

VERTEX: Talking about your technique, are there any special requirements that you use to write? For instance, do you need special environments?

HERBERT: Oh, I think we all need special environments for various things we do. A writer needs time, uninterrupted time, with the tools of his trade: paper and a writing instrument of some kind. Jack Vance uses pencil or pen. I think he has a rather interesting

technique. He uses various colored pens; he has a dish of them beside him. When he gets tired of blue he writes with green, or red, or orange, or black. I use a typewriter. I think that's the newspaper training. I learned to type at about age fourteen and I touch-type. You train the thoughts to come out of the ends of your fingers in this particular mechanical way. I think you get a kinesthetic link right through the body. The thought comes into your head and goes right through your hands onto the paper, you see. So I need a place where I can sit down and not be interrupted for at least four hours a day, or six, and often much more.

VERTEX: Do you write long hours when you get inspired?

HERBERT: Oh, I don't wait for inspiration. I just sit down and work at creating the thing that has interested me from the start. The three books of the Dune series still interest me very much because of the way these impulses form in the organism we call human society.

VERTEX: There've been a lot of changes in our human society, our human culture, since you first wrote Dune. Are you incorporating these changes?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. The book is being changed by experience. A man is a fool not to put everything he has, at any given moment, into what he is creating. You're there now doing the thing on paper. You're not killing the goose, you're just producing an egg. So I don't worry about inspiration, or anything like that. It's a matter of just sitting down and working. I have never had the problem of a writing block. I've heard about it. I've felt reluctant to write on some days, for whole weeks, or sometimes even longer. I'd much rather go fishing, for example, or go sharpen pencils, or go swimming, or what not. But, later, coming back and reading what I have produced, I am unable to detect the difference between what came easily and when I had to sit down and say, "Well, now it's writing time and now I'll write." There's no difference on paper between the two.

VERTEX: That sounds like it might stem from your early newspaper experience, where you had to write regardless of the conditions or how you felt.

HERBERT: Yeah, you sit down and you just have conditioned yourself to: now it's writing time and you have a deadline sitting out there somewhere and you're going to do the very best you can right here at this moment: and so You do It.

VERTEX: What other things are you writing now, besides the last of the Dune novels?

HERBERT: Well, I've been doing the narrative script for a documentary about the navy demonstration flight team, the Blue Angels. It attracted me because it wasn't a conventional documentary; it wasn't just 'here we're going to do some groovy things flying.' I am a pilot, so I was interested from the flying point of view, but I was also interested because here were these fellows flying very hot aircraft and doing extraordinary things with them, and it struck me that they didn't really know what they were doing. They knew flying; they knew they were doing a great thing and they were getting all this elation out of it, but they didn't understand their relationship to themselves and the airplane and the rest of the world. What they were demonstrating to people was that a human being could actually do these really extraordinary things: flying two aircraft towards each other, for example, at a closing speed of eighteen hundred feet a second. You think about that eighteen hundred feet a second And pass within three feet of each other. They train themselves so that the aircraft flies them as much as they are flying it, only we had to tell them that they were doing this. They thought they were controlling the aircraft, you see. The idea of absolute control is a hang up of Western culture. It is built into our language; it's part of the verb to be: "Well, you either do it or you don't!" It's the old Cartesian dichotomy--the separation between body and mind. Well, there is no separation between body and mind.

VERTEX: You talked earlier about the world culture, a composite of all the cultures on the Earth. Apparently you've thought about this at some length. Do you see lines, trends, things that are common to all cultures, a trend that this culture is following now?

HERBERT: Well, I don't see trends if you're thinking of "where are we going," but I see many, many influences which are going to be mutually interactive, creating something new. Of course, you can

talk then about certain things that are going to happen. I think that, barring a tremendous breakthrough in energy sources, which is always a possibility (it's our hope, our belief in miracles, you see), we are going to see animal dieback in human populations in some areas of the world. Specifically, in at least one area, I have other areas in mind, but the island of Java, which I visited last summer, now has a population of more than 80 million effectively living on land which is about the size of one-third of the state of Washington … 80 million people. They have urban density in the countryside. Now, they do not occupy all of the available land on Java, all of the available surface, but some of it is non-usable for human purposes under present circumstances. So, again barring some tremendous breakthrough in energy and food sources, an animal dieback will happen there because they are doing nothing about their growing population. They still have one of the largest population growth rates in the world. Now, and let's be conservative about it, if they double their population before the year 2000 that land will not be able to support them with present energy sources. It is barely able to support them now. So they are very close to a crash, to a population crash. Now, I think that the rest of the world will effectively be helpless in the face of it. You could not get enough food there and if you did you would only exacerbate the problem if you just gave food.

VERTEX: Why is that?

HERBERT: Because the pressures on a society, the pressures of danger, including the pressures of starvation, tend to increase the population. There is a thrust of procreation.

VERTEX: That's what happens during war times.

HERBERT: Yes, we come out of a war with more population than when we go into it, despite the losses in the war. So I am predicting that Java is going to experience a population dieback, a population crash, within at most fifteen years. That's going to have one hell of an effect on the rest of the planet. Not just the inability to cope with it in conventional terms; that is, produce food and give it to them, or whatever. But people are then going to look inward. at their own populations. Whole societies are going to look inward at their own efforts. I really believe that what we popularly call 'the change in

morality.' that is, sex as recreation rather than procreation, is a social effort to cope with the necessity to limit the population and still deal with sexual drives.

VERTEX: So it's a high speed evolution.

HERBERT: Yes, I see it that way. Japan has been able to deal with its rate of growth rather dramatically. I see the same sort of thing happening in the United States. I do not see the same sort of thing happening in Muslim countries or in Latin America. Latin America is another area we want to look at in this respect, where the potential of population crashes exists because they are failing to deal with the problems in the face of the necessity to do so. If they do not limit population they must find other ways to deal with the increase, you see.

VERTEX: To get back to science fiction, what do you feel is the role of science fiction? Do you feel that science fiction can help, or is helping to solve some of these problems?

HERBERT: I think science fiction does help, and it points in very interesting directions. It points in relativistic directions. It says that we have the imagination for these other opportunities, these other choices. We tend to tie ourselves down to limit ed choices. We say, "Well, the only answer is…." or, "If you would just…." Whatever follows these two statements narrows the choices right there. It gets the vision right down close to the ground so that you don't see anything happening outside. Humans tend not to see over a long range. Now we are required, in these generations, to have a longer range view of what we inflict on the world around us. This is where, I think, science fiction is helping. I don't think that the mere writing of such a book as Brave New World or 1984 prevents those things which are portrayed in those books from happening. But I do think they alert us to that possibility and make that possibility less likely. They make us aware that we may be going in that direction. We may be contriving a strictly controlled police culture. B. F. Skinner worries the hell out of me. He is right out of Huxley. He is standing there like a small boy saying, "Please let me have a world like this because I feel safe in it!" He is saying, "I want to control it." He may be very accurate in his assessment that our total society is going in that direction and that maybe he is opting for the lesser of

numerous evils, in his view. But what kind of a society would that produce?

VERTEX: We'd like to touch on some of the personal aspects of your life. You mentioned earlier that some of your hobbies included electronics. What are some of the other things that you do for recreation?

HERBERT: I like to do cabinetry; I like to do things with my hands when I'm not writing. I feel that I'm getting as far away as I conveniently can from the activity of sitting at a typewriter and putting words on paper by doing these other things. It's helpful to me; it's a kind of a catharsis. I garden. I have six and a half acres in the northeast corner of the Olympic peninsula in the state of Washington. I am in the process of developing what, I hope, will be a demonstration plot of land in which the demonstration will be that one can live a relatively high quality of life without an enormous, irreplaceable energy drain. I am going to do some hand work on the land. I shovel dirt and move rocks. I am in the process of creating a very small lake/pond/marsh combination by staggering the depth of it. I am going to plant wild rice and a new upland rice which has been developed for high altitude use in the Philippine Islands. I am not one of those people who believes in the "hot" gospel of ecology that man should keep his hands off the land. I believe that when he changes the land he ought to do it with an eye to the future, and with a little loving care so that when he has finished changing the land something is there that is more sustaining than what was there before. I will be able to plant trout in this pond and frogs and that sort of thing. It will attract birds that feed on the rice. That's why I'm planting it there. I'm going to build a kind of meeting house there--a guest house for friends to come m and have seminars and that sort of thing so that we can rap and exchange ideas. I hope to build it out of stabilized adobe, which is a very fine insulating material. As I dig the adobe out of the ground it will provide me with a basement in this guest house. Some of the land we scoop back for this lake-cum-pond will also provide us with adobe. I felt I had to put my hands where my mouth was. I was going around speaking about these things and it's one thing to say, "We ought to be doing," and it's another thing to just go ahead and do it and say, "Well, this is the way I think we

ought to do it and here is the example. I wasn't right about this aspect of it. I found that to do this particular thing my original approach had to be modified this way." This is what we always find out when we get our hands dirty. The element of doing it always teaches us much more. That is one of the hangups of education. You wanted to know more about my personal life I've been teaching at the University of Washington up until the last quarter. Now I've taken a two year leave.

VERTEX: What courses were you teaching?

HERBERT: I was teaching a lecture course called Utopia/Dystopia, which was an examination of the myth of the better life; how we carry it in our heads. We don't do anything without resorting to this myth: growing hair on our faces, our choice of friends, the clothing we wear, the kind of government we choose, who we say is the best leader, who we say is a bad leader. We don't go into a voting booth without taking this myth with us.

VERTEX: Have you developed the course materials for this?

HERBERT: I developed the course materials. It struck me that academe is far gone down this long road of "education can be done with power." Now, all of academe is not down there. We have many, many beautiful people in education who manage to work in spite of the administrative power intrusions. But when you come right down to it, a school is a "person" who has information which works. He can demonstrate that it works and it is people who want to do what this person does. They want to learn how to make things work that way.

VERTEX: Do you enjoy teaching this course?

HERBERT: I enjoy it. I teach it on the basis of pass/fail. I have to grade for the system, but I give everybody an 'A'. Grading intrudes on education. It's quite obvious that we are an unique and different species. That being a sexually reproduced species, we are not all equal. Not in our abilities, our desires, or anything else. Each of us is one-of-a-kind. This happens in a class too. There are people with certain capabilities in one direction which, if you developed a measuring system in that direction, you could say are better than

others; but this effectively blocks what you can learn from everyone in the class. Class ought to be a place where teachers learn too. I have what I think is a very effective way of measuring whether people are getting anything that I have to give in a class situation, and that's whether I'm getting anything from them. If I'm learning from them I know they're learning from me. Now, I am not saying by this that we should immediately start medical students on a pass/fail system. Don't read me wrong on this. We have developed a set of parameters for a certain thing. But, we ought to recognize what we're doing, how we have developed those parameters, and how tightly we constrict them so that the end products are supposed to be stamped out the same. Really, this effectively stops development. Somewhere down the line, you have to have a man who can do something that others cannot do and can demonstrate this capability. He will say, "What I can do is this…."

VERTEX: He would be transferring that information.

HERBERT: Yes. "Here's how I do it." Now, obviously, this might not be the only way to do it for all time. It may not be the best way. We may develop far more effective ways of doing these things. But, under a power-oriented society, power adheres to people who have knowledge of how a thing works, no matter how temporary that "working" may be.

VERTEX: And the power seldom goes away afterwards.

HERBERT: Well, yes. Power tends to attract power, so that it effectively constricts avenues of development.

VERTEX: What would be a way out of that? How could you widen those avenues of development?

HERBERT: Well, if you're not to go to a completely chaotic society, with all the problems inherent in that, and that's not the answer, then we need ways that test the most outrageous concepts.

VERTEX: Do you have any idea how that can be done?

HERBERT: It was done under so-called "primitive" conditions by several avenues. The hermit could go out and do his thing. But

we're running out of hermit space. The man with an idea that if you cut sections off a log and put a limb through the middle of them and put a load on the limb--you could carry a heavier load, drag it anyway, roll it--that man could just go do it. But our total society has found that if you let the physicists, say, build their wheel and cut their logs--then the resultant product becomes something that is used in a power context and, eventually, maybe a war. Eventually, maybe the destruction of the total planet. In this respect, I'm not as much worried by atomic weapons as I am by the whole structure and how it uses the products which accumulate in it. Far more dangerous to world society, in terms of springing upon us from an unknown corner, is the ability of a chemist and a pharmacist working in a basement, say, in South Africa to produce a mutated disease that would spread like wildfire throughout the world. Very cheap….

VERTEX: Just like the old science fiction stories.

HERBERT: It's very real, and a real potential in our world today.

VERTEX: We're really kind of living in a science fiction world today, aren't we?

HERBERT: Yes. I see this very clearly, that all of these things are accumulating around us. There are developments in several fields. There's no way to control these, no effective way to channel them and stop them in terms of present social directives, such as governments and social arbiters. There is no way, for example, to prevent the pharmacist or chemist from working in that basement in South Africa.

VERTEX: That's true. Well, don't we really have to find ways to do that in order to survive?

HERBERT: I think we are going at it in the wrong direction. We're thinking of controlling it rather than having a world society where people just don't want to do that sort of thing, don't want to destroy their fellows.

VERTEX: If we could learn how to do that we would have most of our problems solved.

HERBERT: It's not The answer and it's not an easy thing. Part of it is in recognizing the essential humanity, that all other humans are like me in some way. You know, when you come right down to it, a society defines that word, human. We think we know what a human being is. I begin the class by having them define human. I don't say homo sapiens, I don't say I want a medical definition, a physical definition, or anything else. I just say, define it. And, with a little gentle nudging here and there, we come to my assumption, which is that most societies define human as "like me." If they are sufficiently like me I'll let my daughter marry one. If they are not like me, they are somehow not quite human. They're gooks, or niggers, or wops, or chinks. You know, everybody knows, they're not human … not quite. Or they're dirty Indians, or mixed. All you have to do is look at them to see they're not like me. They don't feel things the way I do. So that, if it's necessary, for some reason that I define, to kill off a few of them, well, the world hasn't lost much.

VERTEX: Those are hard basic assumptions to overcome.

HERBERT: Right. They are very hard basic assumptions to overcome, because they are ground into our tribal ancestry and they go so far as, say, a person who works for AT&T and has really "bought it" knows that he is better than somebody who works for US Steel. The guy from US Steel, of course, is just a little less than human, thereby.

VERTEX: There are a great many people out there who respect your writings, Mr. Herbert, and your abilities. Would you like to say something to them? … to all the young people, especially.

HERBERT: Yes. I would like to tell them to be very careful about finding scapegoats. Technology is not a thing out there to be destroyed, thereby solving all our problems. How far back do we cut it? Do we go back to hand saws and hand axes? Which elements of the technology will we discard? I would say to let their imaginations run free. Go ahead, try to imagine things that would be fun and humorous and whatever, things that would be interesting to make. Do it with an eye to how many ripples these things will create and who those ripples may inundate. Eventually, you have to sing for your supper.

VERTEX: Thank you very much, Mr. Herbert.

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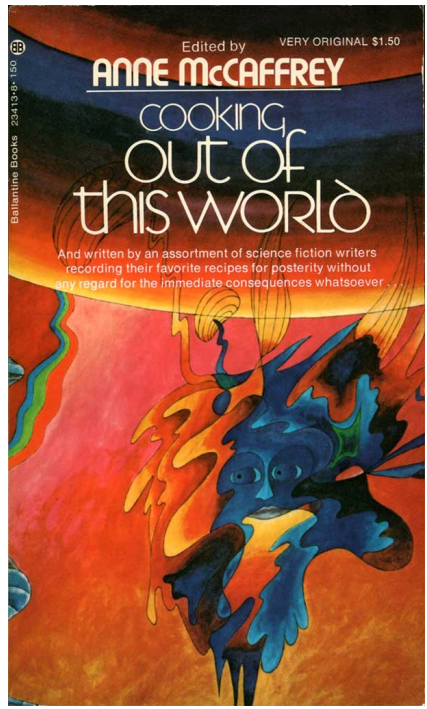

Cover art by Jacques Wyrs

Beef in Oyster Sauce

1 lb. tenderloin or sukiyaki beef sliced thin across grain.
1 tsp. minced garlic
6 green onions, chunked
3 tbsp, soy sauce
⅓ cup oyster sauce (buy from Oriental grocery)
⅓ cup thinly sliced green pepper
1 tsp. sugar
¼ cup said (or good Chablis)

1 tsp. minced ginger (*fresh* ginger)
½ cup beef stock
½ cup Japanese mushrooms
cornstarch

Cut beef in small, thin slices. Butcher can do this for you on slicing machine, or you can freeze the meat and cut it while still partly frozen. Slice (thin) onions, mushrooms. Coat meat with cornstarch, mix with mushrooms. Mix beef stock, oyster sauce with 1 (one) tbsp, cornstarch. Heat 2 (two) tbsp, oil in bottom of a wok. Toss-cook garlic, green onions, and pepper until lightly translucent; remove from oil and keep warm. Cook meat and mushrooms in oil about one minute, tossing as it cooks. Add sugar, ginger, soy, and wine to stock mix; bring to boil separately. Return garlic, green onions, and pepper to meat mixture, pour the hot sauce mix over the meat, etc. Serve immediately with steamed rice.

This will serve four normal human beings or two hungry science fiction types. Poul and Karen Anderson and Jack and Norma Vance once polished off three times this recipe measurement plus generous servings of Peking goose. Of course, Bev and I helped them somewhat.

Peking Goose

1 tender whole goose
½ cup honey
1½ tsp. salt
4 tbsp, red vegetable sauce (a canned sauce made from garlic, soy beans, and red rice, available from Chinese grocery; or make your own by milling in blender one part garlic to four parts soy beans to two parts red rice.)
1½ tsp. raw sugar (NOT the so-called “clean-raw.” Get the true raw sugar, from health food store if necessary.)
1 cup boiling water
3 tbsp. Oriental rice wine or a good white (Chablis or Sherry)
1½ tsp. five-fragrances spice (absolutely essential;

get it from a Chinese grocery.)
1½ tsp. white wine vinegar
Chinese plum sauce (plum butter makes an excellent substitute.)

Clean the goose and check for pinfeathers, then submerge it in a large pot of boiling water for 2 (two) minutes. Drain and dry the skin with towel. Take an icepick and gently stab through the fat layer all over the skin—perforations about a quarter of an inch apart *all over it.* Pop in a preheated oven (450° F.) for 2 (two) minutes. Combine honey and cup of boiling water and place in shallow pan (large cookie pan is excellent). Roll the goose in the honey mixture, using hands to spread it; cover the entire skin. Hang goose to drain over the honey pan. After two hours, rub inside of goose with salt and five-fragrances spice mixture, then repeat immersion of goose in honey, covering entire skin. Repeat treatment with honey every two hours for about ten hours. Hang the goose for a total of 24 hours (including the ten hours of honey treatment). Hang it always by the neck. This is easier if you can get a goose with the head still attached. Skin should be hard to the touch when it has dried sufficiently. Mix the red vegetable sauce, vinegar, wine, and sugar and coat the inside of the goose generously. Roast over open barbecue and serve with small circles of unleavened white bread (the soft Oriental or Greek style) and Chinese plum sauce.

If you do not have a barbecue, you can use your regular oven with the following technique: Use a pan with a shallow amount of water in it; place the goose on a rack well out of the water. Preheat oven to 400° F. and roast goose for about 25 minutes or until it is lightly browned; reduce heat to 275° F. and roast 40 minutes to three hours longer depending on size of goose—about ½ hour a pound at 275° F.—basting frequently with drippings. Turn oven off, but leave door closed; allow goose to remain in oven for another 20 to 30 minutes. You want a dark brown color and crackly skin.

Sukiyaki

Sukiyaki (pronounced skiyaki) is more a way of life than a recipe. Once you get the hang of it, you can play many variations on the

theme. Insist on the freshest vegetables you can get. The meat must be sliced very thin. The technique of layering in a pan should follow the dictum: vegetables requiring most cooking go farthest down in the pan. Using this technique, you can actually cook sukiyaki very rapidly in quite a deep kettle, making certain that the top layer of meat covers all the greens and seals in the mixture.

The rule of thumb is ¼ to ½ pound of beef per person. Remember that there is no single master sukiyaki recipe. It should be served with rice, and the best way to cook it is at the table in front of your guests. We often use an electric skillet. You can use a hibachi if you take off the grill and set the pan right into the coals, but prepare the pan first off the heat until you learn to layer the food into it rapidly.

Prepare your seasoning mixture ahead of time and have it ready at hand when you start to cook.

Seasoning mixture:

¾ cup soy sauce (Japanese *shoyu* preferred)
½ cup raw sugar (real raw sugar, NOT the so-called "clean-raw.")
3 tbsp, said
1 cup hot water
1 tsp. minced fresh ginger

Cook your hot rice timed to serve when the sukiyaki is ready.

The Sukiyaki for four persons:

2 lbs. thinly sliced sukiyaki beef, cut across the grain. (Tenderloin preferred.)
1 piece of beef kidney suet (about 2" x 3" by ½")
1 large white onion sliced very thin
1 bunch of green onions cut in about 2-inch lengths
1 block of fresh bean cake (tofu) cut in 1-inch squares
1 cup of fresh bean sprouts
1 can (16 oz.) of bamboo shoots sliced thinly lengthwise

1 small package of bean thread softened ahead of time in hot water
½ pound fresh mushrooms sliced rather thickly lengthwise
1 pound of fresh spinach broken into bite-size pieces and pre-cooked about one minute in boiling water.

Heat pan until suet sizzles. Swish suet around to coat entire inner surface of pan. Add meat and brown it lightly, then remove to side dish. Recoat pan with suet oil. Place layer of sliced onions in bottom, add layer of bamboo shoots, mushrooms, tofu, bean sprouts (I dry them first lightly in oven to remove some of the moisture), green onion; top with layer of spinach to cover entire contents right to edge of pan and do the same with the thinly sliced meat. I generally add the seasoning mixture at the tofu layer, using just enough of it to come up to the bottom of the tofu. At this time, you can open up a small circle in the center of the mix and introduce bean thread or shirataki. The sukiyaki is done when spinach is tender to probing with chopsticks: 5 to 8 minutes.

Vegetables we have added to our Sukiyaki with lip-smacking success:

Fresh tomatoes (skinned, sliced, and squeezed to remove excess water)

Asparagus (very fresh young shoots sliced once lengthwise)

Chinese cabbage (this tends to dominate unless you braise it first in suet oil and add as spinach layer)

Green pepper (treat lightly, as with Chinese cabbage)

Fresh corn (remove from cob and substitute for bean sprouts, placing in center cavity with bean thread)

Chinese snow peas (slice thinly lengthwise and

place directly atop the white onions)

Summer squash (sliced *very* thin and placed atop bottom onion layer as substitute for bamboo shoots)

The most successful variations on the sukiyaki theme avoid a one-flavor domination.

Always leave the suet in the pan while cooking. It continues to give off oil which adds a marvelous flavor to the finished dish. It's normal for the pan to smoke a little at the start.

There are as many variations on how to cook sukiyaki (and the proper ingredients to use) as there are districts in Japan. Some prefer a very shallow pan, with meat cooked first about one minute, then pushed into corner of pan, vegetables added each in its own pocket of the pan, enough seasoning sauce added to just gently simmer the dish, green onions added last. Most recipes call for high heat all the way, however, and quick cooking to a slightly crisp "al dente" for vegetables. Some cooks prefer to omit the ginger; others add it as a few thin slices to the pan right after the suet coating. Some prefer more green onions and a sharp reduction in the sliced white onion. Some prefer no white onion at all.

If you're cooking it at the table, start your guests with a thin Japanese soup to enjoy while you're cooking. Generally, sukiyaki is served with a table setting of three bowls at each place: 1 for the sukiyaki, 1 for rice, and 1 for a raw egg (into which you dip each bite as you take it). A variation on this is to lightly poach the eggs in a bit of the seasoning mixture or in the pot broth, then serve one each for dipping in the yolk. Some poach the eggs right in the pan, opening a center cavity for it at the appropriate moment.

The rice is served and eaten plain to renew the palate between bites of the other food.

Serve small cups of hot saki with this dish and it becomes a pure delight.

The above is just an introduction to sukiyaki cookery. I urge you to

experiment. Remember: *very* fresh vegetables. Get the cooking times correct (thin slicing helps with the ones which require longer cooking time). Supreme success is when all of the ingredients cooked in one pot come out “just right.”

Go thou and do likewise.

Sandworms And Saviors

by Ed Leimbacher,
Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, 05/1975

Frank Herbert believes in what he writes; his lifestyle is the proof.

A selling science fiction author since the early Fifties, Herbert's worldwide fame has really come only in the last six or eight years with the continuing acclaim accorded Dune*, his environment-conscious, worlds-unknown adventure novel, and its sequel,* Dune Messiah.

The Dune *books operate on many levels—as pure swashbuckling adventure, as an examination of the messiah figure in religion, as a carefully documented study in world-building (i.e. the effort to turn the desert planet of Arrakis into a greenbelt for man). Moreover, they scrutinize man's feudal societies, court intrigues, and desert mores; represent a consciously literate and literary attempt at quality prose styling; and, with the famous giant Sandworm, even take on some of the trappings of a sophisticated monster story. Other levels may exist too, but you probably get the idea.*

During the same period that Dune *was winning awards and selling more than a million copies, Herbert also became known as an intelligent spokesman for the whole movement towards environmental awareness in America. He lectured widely, wrote numerous essays and introductions to the books of others, and flew back and forth across the nation adding his jovial, somewhat overwhelming presence to government conferences and college seminars.*

At 54, Herbert is a barrel-chested, hearty and hairy fellow, looking something like a sandy-haired Santa Claus. The length of his beard may fluctuate, but his mustache stays truly monumental—a veritable Jerry Colonna-styled soup-strainer jutting from his upper lip like a wiry plant on an Arrakeen sand-slope.

A newspaperman of repute for many years, Herbert is also a licensed pilot, commercial photographer, a 16mm. filmmaker, and Muad'Dib-knows-what-all-else. With the money from Dune *and his many other*

fine SF novels, Herbert recently purchased six acres in the northeast corner of Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. He and his wife Bev are slowly turning this sloping woodland into their own closed ecological system, a small self-supporting haven for the Herberts and whatever friends may come to visit or life.

When my wife Sharon and I visited them one afternoon last August, we found Frank stripping the pea-vines in his garden; he proudly took us on a tour of the man-made pond, hexagonal chicken house, and landscaped woods surrounding the Herberts' airy and handsome cedar-wood A-frame.

He spoke eagerly of the plans for each gadgets and environmental tools he would soon install—like the windmill to generate electricity

Sharon later asked him, tongue-in-cheek, what he intends to do when he finishes "playing with all these toys." His answer exemplifies the elan with which Frank Herbert embraces life and attacks the blank waiting paper in his typewriter: "Get some new toys, of course!"

SF: When did you first start writing, Frank?

HERBERT: Oh, I started writing when I was eight years old. When my mother came here recently to live with us, I saw one of those originals that she had saved. It was fascinating to me to go back after all these years and see that, at eight years old—although it was very ham-handed—I had a narrative hook and I was dealing with the emotions of the people, the primary force, rather than trying to make everything intellectually satisfactory. Even then I knew it, evidently instinctively.

SF: When did you become a professional writer?

HERBERT: I sold to the pulps when I was still in my teens. And then I got into newspaper work; I got married and I needed a regular check. Because damn few teenage writers support themselves well. I sold before World War II, but my real magazine-selling period came shortly after WWII, about 1947. I would write six hours a day and work eight hours a day for a newspaper. And I'd write on weekends.

SF: What sort of pulps are you talking about?

HERBERT: Oh, adventure short stories, *Doc Savage*, that sort of thing.

SF: Oh yeah? *Doc Savage*? Under your name?

HERBERT: The only thing I ever used a pseudonym for was Westerns. Don't ask me *what.* [Laughs]

SF: Juvenilia you want to lose, eh?

HERBERT: I was learning; it's a good place to learn. Then I started selling to some of the slicks—*Esquire*, that sort of thing. Early Fifties I started writing ecological articles, and then I wrote *Dragon in the Sea*—in '54, I believe: I think it was first serialized in '55. From then on, I was writing mostly science fiction.

SF: Did *Dragon* grow out anything in particular?

HERBERT: It grew out of what I saw happening to our use of fossil fuels. You see, I wrote my first ecological article about oil shortages of oil and that sort of thing in 1952.

SF: You were a little ahead of the game.

HERBERT: A little bit—20 years or more. But it's interesting to me to note that all the writing I did, including *Dragon In the Sea*, didn't do one fraction as much to tell people what the hell was going on as the past six months of living with the shortage. *Then* you learn it; you're in it.

SF: What about the Cold War? Was a factor in *Dragon*?

HERBERT: That was a factor. I believe there are cyclic functions to this kind of international collision. We're in a process of softening of this kind of international friction. But I think that we'll go back into a hardening period later. And then, with any luck at all, we'll have another softening period.

There are just certain kinds of paranoia that function on an international scale—sometimes for good reason. You know, there

are people who say: "Let go get our neighbors!“ This is why I get upset with people who want to go thru complete unilateral disarmament.

SF: That strikes me as strange, in relation to your activities in the *World Without War Council*.

HERBERT: Oh, I think that if we could get that going internationally, that would be one of the best defusing processes that could be developed, because it would go right to the root of the things which feed this paranoia. You see, people are then *talking* to each other, and if you're really neighbors and are helping each other—for example, one of the best things that could happen to this world is for the Soviet Union to become completely dependent on our wheat, and us to become completely dependent on their natural gas.

Anything that gets the dialogue out of those characteristics which feed the paranoia and get down to really physical things, where we're interdependent and have to realize it, is a good thing. We are interdependent anyway, but you have to *prove* it to people. We're a colony of boll weevils living in a jar of corn meal, and there *are* limits.

SF: What was the response to *Dragon*? Were you an overnight success, so to speak?

HERBERT: Oh, no, the New York literati, the critics there, panned the book. But it's now considered a classic and has just been reissued under the original title, *Under Pressure*.

SF: Did you turn straight from that to the work that led to *Dune*?

HERBERT: No, I did a lot of short stories, novelettes… I did things like receiving a magazine cover from a publisher in New York: "We've just bought this cover and we'd like a story to justify it."

SF: How well did those kinds of assignments work?

HERBERT: There's nothing wrong with doing that; they're all exercises of the imagination. When we did *Five Fates*, five of us used

the same opening, the same characters; the first several pages are identical, yet five more different stories you could not find. So it's just a way to get into it.

But I was doing the research which eventually became *Dune* in the Fifties as well. It isn't right to say that I researched it for more than six years, because that sort of implies that's *all* I did. But I did research it over a period of more than six years.

SF: What kicked it off in general?

HERBERT: Well, I collect material in filing drawers. I was writing for news magazines and reporting, mostly feature stuff. And I was doing some photography as well. In those days a photographer and writer could wear the same hat.

But I was collecting material and kind-of had it in the back of my head to do a novel concerned with the messianic thrust in human society—how messiahs originate, and what we do with 'em. And I collected a great deal of material—studied comparative religions, had a lot of things in a whole half of a filing-cabinet drawer. About this time, still very much interested in ecological matters, I had gone to Florence, Oregon, where the U.S. Department of Agriculture had what was probably the world's pilot project on the control of dunes. We solved it: how you hold a dune, keep it from covering a house or a road or a forest. And all of the primary work was done down there. Israel, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, India, Chile, all sent people here to learn from us how we did it.

SF: Why was this going on in Oregon?

HERBERT: Because there were huge sand dunes on the coast down there, with a small town, Florence, which would support the staff. Everything was conducive to this kind of pilot project—learning what kind of things would grow in sand, where you planted 'em, how they held the sand against the wind. You see, sand is just a slow-motion wave when you've got enough wind, when it's loose enough and you've got enough wind to move it.

SF: How large were the dunes?

HERBERT: Oh, some of 'em 80, 90 feet tall. But USDA learned how to solidify them there with growth and make wind-breaks out of 'em. which is essentially one of the first stopping actions which you can engage in to hold an area against the encroachments of desert sand. So I went down there, flew over the area and took aerial photographs, went down and talked to the people, and did a series of magazine articles on the importance of this research. And all that went into another filing folder: it also got me interested in what things we were doing to reclaim deserts, what causes deserts, and how we recover from those causes.

Lots of people think that climatic changes bring about deserts, but that's not the *primary* cause. There's more rainfall in the Negev right now than there was in the days of Solomon when it was a lush growing area. No, *man* made that desert. Man and camels and goats.

Goats are desert makers. When we were in Pakistan a few years ago, we did a kind of head count on the national census of goats and how they let the goats run free in the countryside. They're browsing animals, you know. We figured that the goats in Pakistan at that time were making desert at the rate of about ten million acres every eight years.

SF: Sounds like we need an effort to stomp out goats.

HERBERT: Not so much that as to stamp out the practice of letting them run free, not keeping them coralled or bridled in some way so they won't eat out the trees. I've watched them climb a tree and girdled it. I took photographs showing them doing this.

Anyway, I started collecting all this material about desert-making and the recovery of deserts, and suddenly it occurred to me—late bloomer that I am—that most of messianic religions have come from what I would call "hard-scrabble" area—not necessarily desert, but areas where population on the land was heavy, where there were deserts at least on the fringes of the population, or where people were actually *in* the desert as they were in the Middle East.

So I thought in terms of putting these two packages of research

material together. And immediately I saw that it was bigger than one book, so I plotted *three* books. I was going to write all three of them before turning any one in. But then I saw that it could probably be *four* books, and I had two of them written then.

So I submitted the first two to John Campbell at *Analog*, and that's what John published as *Dune* (under the names "*Dune World*" and "*Prophet of Dune*"). So *Dune,* the book, is actually two shorter books. I wrote the third one, *Dune Messiah*, adhering strictly to the original thrust of my plotting. It was a pivotal book pointing forward and backward—what happens to a messianic religion when it gets power, how they use their power, how does power feed back and affect the society that holds it.

Anyway, I wrote *Messiah* out of that original plot, and then a lot of other things intruded—demands on my time, demands to write this and that—so there was a long hiatus between that part of *Dune* and the fourth book. I've just recently gotten back to it; I had to re-plot it because I had learned a lot of things in the meanwhile. I'm changing it to fit what I learned.

SF: *Son of Dune Messiah* – we can look forward to it someday?

HERBERT: It's more than half-thru.

SF: Can we talk now about the various ecological and literary levels of *Dune*?

HERBERT: Well, the book was not so much written as it was *composed*. Both it and *Dune Messiah* were written in that same fashion, which means that you have quite a number of threads going thru them. There's a thread, for example, of color-keying—where you have an obvious emotional input early in the book, the colors associated with that are recalled later, just a little blip of them, to elicit the reminiscence of the first instance.

In camera terms, choice of close-up and extreme close-up—what you select, a person's hand, his finger, his eyes, this is brought back the same way; there's a thread of this all the way thru the book. There is a very heavy emphasis on the kinds of rhythm that are elicited in each part—where you want to speed up the action, it's

short sentences, action verbs; where you want to slow it down and savor it, where you're rolling thru something that's going to build to a crescendo later, it's involved sentences, the verb “to be” much in play, and longer rhythms.

And then the whole structure of the book was built on a slow rhythm building to a crunch point, then a little faster rhythm building to a crunch point, a little faster building to a crunch point, and so on, all the way thru.

SF: What about all the songs and excerpts from histories?

HERBERT: Of course, I was writing the books for a Western culture, and had the audience very much in mind. And in this culture, when you say “desert,” the automatic assumption is *Arab*. So I went to Arabic for most of my names and language forms, for many things.

But what I did was, I used a self-constructed elision process to change some of the words the way words do change across centuries. For example, the English we speak today is not the English of Shakespeare. When Shakespeare said someone was “honest,” he meant they were “virginal.” To “make an honest woman” out of somebody was to restore her good name, the good name that goes with virginity.

So I went thru this process in the structural changes of words and labels and sentence structure to elicit—you see, I couldn't keep saying “dry, dry. dry, dry” all the way thru. But I could elicit that in the mind of the reader, so that you're *in* there feeling it—you're supplying the pictures yourself. I wanted a feudal structure to the society, so I went back to Provençal lyrics for all of the songs; they came right out of a feudal society, and I wrote them in that style, actually had songs in mind. The same emphases are in the excerpts from histories.

SF: But they also have the *religious* overtones.

HERBERT: Oh yes, but before we get off the feudal subject—I think that the feudal structure is a recurrent theme in human societies. We have a lot of feudatories around us right now. You look at a corporation—it's set up as a feudatory. Look at a government

bureaucracy or any single bureau, it's set up the same. It has to do with the chain of command and how it applies. Maybe it goes back to our tribal origins; I suspect that it does.

SF: Let's get back to the "messianic thrust."

HERBERT: Be very careful when talking about cause and effect. I think there's more of a Taoist flavor in my approach to it. There is this kind of background to the messianic prophet: there are conditions which a large segment of the population defines as either intolerable or borderline intolerable. They can be physical conditions of the surroundings—drought, that sort of thing—or they can be, as they are more often, the imposition of tyranny. There is a background of questioning philosophy—that is, the kind of questioning that goes to such questions as: *Why am I here?* Which may be a nonsense question. [Laughs]

SF: [in godlike tones] *Because*.

HERBERT: But it's asked over and over and over! Maybe what we should be asking is: *How?*

You get these inputs into the society. And then you get a thing which we call *prescience*, which may be an accumulation of *petits perceptions*, of small bits of data which a person assembles unconsciously, coming to what he interprets as an intuitive understanding of the condition he's in. However it happens, the person involved sees the future of the course that his society is on, that *he* is on, pretty clearly.

I saw, for example, in '52 that we were going to come to a crunch with fossil fuels. It didn't do any *good* to see it. I mean, I could be John crying in the Wilderness, for all the good it did. I don't classify myself as a prophet, but I use this as an example of one of the functions that a writer *can* fulfill in today's society which *used* to be filled by prophets and messiahs. "You keep that up, boy, and you're going to come to a bad end!" [Laughs]

And the other thing is that the person then goes out and starts telling people about this—there is a *ministry*. Gautama did it, Jesus did it, Mohammed did it.

SF: It's obvious that *Dune* won you much acclaim, aside from immediately winning those major awards, the Nebula and the Hugo. It's continued to sell, been translated…

HERBERT: Into eight languages. Over a million copies sold worldwide.

SF: And has been optioned for the movies for a couple of years now.

HERBERT: Yes. By APJAC. APJAC is Arthur P. Jacobs [producer of all the "Planet of the Apes" movies].

SF: Who is no longer alive.

HERBERT: Who is no longer alive, but his corporation lives on. You see, *that's* the key to immortality: Don't be human, be a corporation.

SF: Have you seen a script or anything?

HERBERT: No. I know there's a *treatment* done. I'll be handling technical direction, technical matters.

SF: At one time, I think you told me that plans were to shoot the film in the interior of Turkey, in those caves in the mountains?

HERBERT: That's still the plan, as far as I know. It's an area northeast of Ankara, heading towards the border.

SF: And what are the plans for the book's famous *Sandworm*?

HERBERT: That comes under *my* department, and what I'm going to do is labor strenuously to prevent this film's turning into an American version of a Japanese monster movie. You know, “The Worm That Came In from the Desert.”

SF: “And Ate Cleveland.”

HERBERT: That's right. You know Harlan Ellison's famous definition of the monster movie? “The Tapioca Pudding That Had Intercourse with Cleveland?”

SF: Of course, your monster *is* slightly scatological if you get right

down to the facts of how he works.

HERBERT: Yes, he's the Creator. You see, I had to get rid of the heat; I had to dissipate the heat of a creature like that going thru sand. There are several ways you could do it—with a lot of water, you could have a cooling system. Or you could do it chemically. So I postulated a chemical factory, and that's where the spice comes from.

So how am I going to *recreate* it? Well, I envisage something more sophisticated, on the order of the Chinatown dragon, but ten times larger and with lots of mechanical assists and people inside to manage it.

SF: Will the movie cover *Dune Messiah*, too?

HERBERT: No, just *Dune*.

SF: *Dune Messiah* takes place ten-twenty years after *Dune*.

HERBERT: Twelve years, actually.

SF: Where does the final book come?

HERBERT: Roughly twenty years after the first book. It's the next generation. Very, very different children from what we tend to think of as a child—unformed mentally and that sort of thing.

SF: What was the result of *Dune*? Did it win immediate acclaim?

HERBERT: Yes, among science fiction fans, and among science fiction authors. It actually won three awards. It shared the International Fantasy Award that year with *Lord of the Flies*. But again, the literary critics didn't read it, or panned it. It never appeared on the official bestseller list, although there was a period of 26 weeks when it was outselling the top of the paperback bestseller list.

SF: Do you think you'll ever tackle another work that large?

HERBERT: Oh yeah, I'm doing it right now. The final book of *Dune* will be a long one.

SF: In addition to the *Dune* trilogy, you've written many other science fiction novels—*The Green Brain, The God Makers, Hellstrom's Hive*. Many of these at least relate to your interest in ecology.

HERBERT: They all do. I'm still mining the same mine.

SF: But different *veins* within it. The *Green Brain* relates to your banties and insects in a way; it's an attempt to stamp out the strange insect life in the Amazon Basin.

HERBERT: Which is postulated as being the last of the world's wild insects. You know, the indiscriminate spraying of the poison called Sevin in Eastern Washington damn near wiped out the fruit farmers over there, and the orchards—because it wiped out the bees.

SF: So there was no pollination.

HERBERT: That's right. American agriculture has not awakened to the fact that what you do is, you build a supportive ecological system out of which you take your share—which can be the lion's share, an *enormous* share. But in the process you support more humans as well as more other kinds of life. We're still at the "Oooh, that's a dirty bug" stage.

My latest "insect" book, *Hellstrom's Hive*, had an interesting genesis, by the way. I wrote the book under another name, a book involving a human culture which develops a hive system, a hive structure, with all its specialization and so on. Living right in our midst without the rest of society knowing about it. I had it all written but had not rewritten it, when an editor in New York told me his company had bought the rights to "Hellstrom's Chronicle" and wanted me to do *Hellstrom's Something* to ride the wave created by the film.

And I said, "No way. I'm not going to do a hack job just to satisfy you. People who like what I write would be put off by that; I'd hurt myself as well as cheat people who pay money to buy a book."

I was about to leave his office when I had one of those flashes, and said, "Hey, you know, I've got a book already written…" [Laughs]

“I can change the name of the hero and do some minor changes, and you can call it *Hellstrom's Hive*.”

SF: One area we haven't covered is. what brought you back to the Northwest?

HERBERT: Both Bev and I are natives, and I figure that this is one of the few areas that can still be ecologically managed—converted to a balanced system. There are other areas in the world, of course, but this is the one I know. so I came back to do what I could about it.

SF: Obviously, then, you're a revolutionary who truly believes in working “within the system”?

HERBERT: I think it is possible to go at the fulcrum points within the system and change those, redirect things that way. I don't necessarily believe that we *will* do this, but that it's *possible*. And that's a better chance than gun and bomb.

Scintillation Magazine

by Daniel DePrez,
Scintillation, 09/1976

SCIN: I wanted to start out by asking about *Children of Dune*, and how it's doing in sales and acceptance.

HERBERT: I have month old information that more than 47,000 copies have been cold nationwide, in seven printings; that means over 50,000 copies in print. It's on *Publishers Weekly's* best-seller list. On *Booksmith's* it's number two or three, I don't recall.

SCIN: Is this something you expected?

HERBERT: I didn't expect it to go that rapidly and skyrocket. I expected it to do well, because the sales of *Dune* are over a million copies in English; perhaps half that in seven other languages. *Dune Messiah* sold three quarters of a million. You can read from that that there would be quite a few sales.

SCIN: How in the film of *Dune* progressing?

HERBERT: It's been put on the back burner for eight months. The word I have (I phoned Paris the other day and talked with Jodorowsky) is that they want to tie down a distribution contract before they complete it, but they've already spent more than two million dollars. I saw the script last week for the first time. There's a lot of difference between a script and the development of a script, pictorially, in a movie; but I'm satisfied with the script.

SCIN: Who did the script?

HERBERT: Jodorowsky.

SCIN: How much did he confer with you on the script?

HERBERT: Not a bit.

SCIN: Were there any pre-production conferences?

HERBERT: No. They didn't make any contact with me at all.

SCIN: Was that your idea?

HERBERT: That was their idea. They're afraid of the author usually, the movie-industry is. Because the authors tend to stand around pulling their hair and saying, “Look at what you're doing to my book!” There are damn’ few people who write books that are capable of being made into a film that know the first thing about filmmaking and the problems of translating. It's like translating into a foreign language.

SCIN: It seems the only time you don't have that problem is in a situation like 2001, where Arthur Clarke was writing the book while the film was being made.

HERBERT: That's right.

SCIN: Can you foresee production of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune*?

HERBERT: Oh, yeah. I'm reasonably sure that if they make this first one, they'll go through a cycle.

SCIN: With Jodorowsky working on them?

HERBERT: I don't know. *That’s* up to the gods.

SCIN: Concerning the messianic impulse existent in the *Dune* Trilogy; do you think Western Civilization in falling away from an impulse of this sort?

HERBERT: I don't think our society is any farther from the messianic impulse than it has ever been. It still believes that heroes are good for you, and that holy heroes are even better. I was just holding that whole concept up to the possibility: maybe ’tain’t so. Maybe heroes aren't good for a society.

SCIN: Where can you see this taking us in the near future?

HERBERT: I can see it taking Jimmy Carter into the presidency.

SCIN: Are we then voting more and more for an image rather than a person?

HERBERT: Yes. For a hero. You see, the messiah is just a super-hero. He has God on his side. We get a full spectrum of variations on this theme. Look at the Kennedy Family. You saw the Kennedys take advantage of every myth-making faculty that Western Culture has developed. Who came up with the idea of calling it Camelot? I mean, that's getting pretty culture conscious…

SCIN: Salinger, probably.

HERBERT: Sure, Pierre in a pretty cagey guy. He knows mythology. That's coming very close to it. You can identify all of the mythological figures in that regime. The Witch Mother, the Wise Old Man, the Fool (that's Pierre)… He played the Fool; but not meaning foolish. Meaning the fellow who asks the embarrassing question of the hero. He who gets the laugh with his question, you see.

SCIN: In the past we've gone to sports heroes and politicians for this "building up". Where do you see us going in the future?

HERBERT: Well, there are Iots of interesting speculations, but to prepare for them you ought to recognize a few things that we're already doing. For example, in England the major rugby sports teams are geographically identified with the regions which used to be fiefs of their kingdom. In other sport, they carry their banner into the sports arena now rather than into the lists or onto the field of battle.

Where are we going? We're going to continue to look for people who don't make mistakes, which is the essence of the hero. It's what created Kennedy; it created Nixon. We, as a society, created both of them. They participated in it. When you demand that your heroes make no mistakes (and they are, after all, human beings who *do* make mistakes), what they do is cover them up. Johnson covered his, Kennedy covered his, Eisenhower covered his; because the society demands that the hero make no mistakes. The hero cannot stand up there and say, “Gee, fellas, I blew that one.”

SCIN: When the hero is exposed, or exposes himself, as with Nixon resigning…

HERBERT: The Potomac Flasher. [Laugh] Who exposes himself… okay, go on… I'm not going to explore that one…

SCIN: When these heroes do fall, do we blindly grab out for someone else…

HERBERT: There's always a reaction and a transition, but we always demand the name things from next one. The next person along assumes the mantle of that mythology. That's what I was exploring in the *Dune* Trilogy.

SCIN: Do you think the success and enchantment with the *Dune* books is due to the great amount of ecological homework you did, or was it the treatment of the messianic impulse; or anything else we've left unmentioned?

HERBERT: I don't think it was any one thing. I hope the basic success was due to the fact that they are entertaining. I hope there was some entertainment, because If you're an author, you're in the entertainment business. That's the basis of our business. If you have a pot of message, that can add to it. But if you only have a pot of message, it can get awfully dull. It gets into passive voice and begins to read an awful lot like a medical report. I'm not ready to fix on any one factor for their success; the success is obvious. One factor, I don't think, controls it. Of course, the ecological elements had something to do with it. Ecology was a concern whose time had come. I started writing about that in 1952. We can write, and write and write about these items that deal with the dirt under our feet but, unless each of us individually experiences them personally, the message of the words has very little impact. It had impact after the fact. People say, "Oh, yeah. So-and-no wrote about that, and by God, it's happening!" This in one of the things, I think, stalled science fiction.

When we began to make moonshots, a lot of science fiction writers, in my presence, said that science fiction was through.

SCIN: I've heard that from outsiders, but never thought the writers

felt that way.

HERBERT: Oh, I've heard a few science fiction writers themselves Say this.

SCIN: You wouldn't be willing to give any names, would you?

HERBERT: I'm not going to point any fingers, because I met some of them recently and we had our laughs. My own contention is that the essence of science fiction is no restrictions. When someone says, “If we only… ,” or “It can't be done,” that's a challenge to science fiction. We say, “Well, maybe… but, by golly, *if* we did *this*!“

Science fiction is a problem solving category. I think that's the really essential area of its popularity. It appeals to yankee ingenuity; and I believe a lot of industry is beginning to look at science fiction no a resource. It has both its good and bad sides. If they will listen to some of the more outré scenario writing techniques, and learn from these how to predict consequences, it could be very helpful to our society in general. If we go on as usual, which I think we're going to do, making the mistakes of the past, then we're in for some hard times. And there’s going to be no place to hide.

SCIN: In a good deal of your fiction, the setting you choose are environments which are hostile to man, who I should have no right or desire to be in, and must fight for survival. Are you, in writing stories with a setting like that, telling us how good we have it here, having a suitable environment, and how we should preserve it?

HERBERT: We have an environment into which hundreds of thousands of generations of humans have fitted themselves. We adapted to the environment and the environment adapted to us. Then, we became technological. The problem with technology is its timescale. It tends to have a very powerful immediate impact. The usual timescale of the universe does not work that way. One of the reasons we should be in space—the primary reason—is that planets are finite. We can sit here now and say, “Oh, not in my lifetime.” That's true. Not in my lifetime, probably. We should not have just the concerns of our own lifetime. We should have some racial or species concerne.

It does not appear, at thin writing, that humans, in any foreseeable future, will be immortal; but the race *can* be immortal. Only if it is not confined to one planet.

SCIN: There are many people who have mentioned the fact that, even if we were to shoot a spaceship loaded with people into space every five minutes, we couldn't get the entire population of the planet.

HERBERT: Who wants to get the entire population of the planet?

SCIN: That's not the concern?

HERBERT: That's not the concern. No, of course not. You see, the problem is we live in a light-switch society. We expect, flipping that technological item over there, for the lights to go on. If they don't go on, we want to call the super, right?

That's not the way the universe works. Except in catastrophes, it does not have that timescale. Technology has had that impact on our planet. It's a difference in timescale.

SCIN: Then, are you on the opposite end from the early science fiction writers who appeared to worship technology with the dream that men could always use technology to warp the environment to his own needs? Are you and other writers saying we must adapt to the environment rather than the other way around?

HERBERT: Or have a decent concern for posterity. If we are making immediate long range impact on the planet, we often times do this without concern for our grand children to the N^{th} counting (which I hope is infinite). We do it without such concern. I'm just saying it's time we had such a concern.

I'm interested, for example, in this monstrous argument over the use of fission power. I think we are being pushed into some very bad decision by people I would classify an psychopaths. I think it's worthy of note that a significant number of the people who are arguing in favor of fast-breeder reactors are, themselves, childless.

The thing that they are not talking about is the data explosion

coupled to the kamikaze impulse in human society. The Secret Service cannot protect a president from a kamikaze. They know this. Likewise, a society cannot build a dangerous artifact and protect it completely from a kamikaze.

The Hanford works, over here on the Columbia River, are like a sword of Damocles hanging over the entire Columbia River Basin downstream, and the area which is touched by the waters of the Columbia River on the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California. The alternatives we are being offered by people who want to go down this technological dead end are all alternatives which would add to the cost—prohibitively to the cost—of such energy. That's nonsense.

I believe there are two factors working to try to get us going for fission power. One is a kind of mechanical fascination that human beings have; it has shiny instruments, and pretty dials and levers. The other in the fact that if you can pass the cost along to an unsuspecting, or a deluded, public then, the hight the capital investment, the greater the profits. These two things are working to get people to choose fission power as though that were our only option. That’s nonsense; that’s a lie. That's not our only option. We have many more options,

SCIN: With elections coming up in November, there’s a measure in Oregon on the ballot for a moratorium on all new nuclear plants of any kind. If that were to pass, the debate would be ended to someone's satisfaction. What would you debate in favor of?

HERBERT: Well, we have numerous alternatives. One is to develop is symbiotic relationship between large urban centers and the agricultural area around them. Such that you use, what are presently waste products, to fuel and fertilize the agricultural area around you for either alcohol, methane, or hydrogen fuel. There are numerous fuels that can be developed from waste and are economically feasible. Another alternative is wind power.

We personally built five models (and right now I'm finishing another novel so I'll have the loot to finish a large one); our resources are limited, but even with our limited resources, I was able to build a windmill, using aircraft technology, that

demonstrates without question that this is a very advantageous area to go into.

I was able to build a wind-mill that you would not have to shutdown in a near hurricane. One which has, high-torque at relatively low wind forces. That means it will be able to do what present-day windmills do not do efficiently. That's with relatively low wind speeds. If you get into areas where we have trade winds, or highly reliable winds such as to and from a desert area, thin becomes a really advantageous way of gathering energy in a non-polluting way. We did it with a relatively low investment.

NASA and the National Science Foundation have been spending millions trying to build something like thin. You can't tell me the thing we centered on and developed, in our own crude way, at our own low cost here, is something they couldn't see. That's nonsense. I don't accuse them of a conspiracy to conceal this kind of development. I just think that we operate unconsciously as a society much as individuals operate unconsciously. It's quite obvious the power merchants of our society don't want us to develop solar energy, or wind energy. Therefore, the money spent to support researchers won't come to anybody who Is suddenly very successful in one of these fields.

SCIN: In the past few years there's been a controversy of the arbitrary titles placed on science fiction writers of old wave and new wave…

HERBERT: Oh, God. I'm not going to get into that argument.

SCIN: Well, I don't want the argument. I was just going to say that in all of the trivial explorations of the subject that I've read, your name never seem to come up on either list. People don't seem to want to classify you as either.

HERBERT: Well, I don't know why. I don't classify myself as either way, anyhow. I think that all literary criticism inevitably taken on certain pretensions. And I don't exclude my own literary criticism. You are being pretentious when you criticize. The only valid criticism… there are two classes of valid criticism. One is history. Does it endure? Will people, ten generations from now, be reading

it? I don't know, how will I know? The other is a kind of pre-screening. I find out from experience that there in a critic whose tastes are like mine. He saves me a lot of trouble. If he says it's a good book, chances are I'll find it's a good book. There in so much being written now that that's a useful service. There's a 180-degree out-of-phase version of this. You can find a critic who, if he says it's a good book, you're not going to like it. But if he says it's a bad book, you are. You're just reading him the other way around. These are the uses of criticism, and these are the only really valid uses of criticism. All these labels we attach to current tastes, phases in any artistic development, may be useful for talking about it currently by saying, "He's a New Wave Writer," that saves you a little verbiage. See? That's about the extent of their usefulness.

SCIN: Should writers like yourself, or writers like, for instance, Harlan Ellison who devotes a lot of energy to focusing acceptance or attention of science fiction from the LA Times Book Review Section, saying, "Don't call it science fiction. Just look at it and if it's good good, if it's not it's not, and don't judge it on the basis of-science fiction,"…

HERBERT: I think that the energy expended for this would be better spent in writing the kind of science fiction which would gain wider acceptance. I think it's amusing… interesting… fun to do on occasion; to worry about whether it's a ghetto or a country club, but you shouldn't have any profound worries about this. My own feeling is that science fiction is not a ghetto, it's a country club. That it is the over-riding genre and you can subtend all other genre under it, because it is the *wider* genre. But, what the hell, all comparisons break down eventually. When I'm pushed with my back against the wall on it, I always say the difference between science fiction and so-called mainstream is the difference between classical music and jazz. You use the same instruments. You use, more or less, the same notation, and yet one of the fields has a wider range of improvisation than the other. How do you compare them? Which do you prefer?

SCIN: In science fiction you have a chance to make your own forms rather than…

HERBERT: You can improvise. You can, improvise, really, in a jazz

way.

SCIN: Just in the past two weeks I've read pieces by Kurt Vonnegut and John Brunner that were about jazz or simply saying, "I like jazz." It seems to be a common thread among science fiction people.

HERBERT: I know or only one science fiction writer who *says* he doesn't like jazz. And I know another science fiction writer, Jack Vance, who in probably one of the world's leading experts on jazz.

SCIN: In essence then, the science fiction writer improvises within forms that are most comfortable to the writer, and someone else comes along and decides to call it science fiction.

HERBERT: That's what academe does. That's my worry about the academics sudden discovery of science fiction. You can analyze the life out of it, analyze all the fun out of it. You can get science fiction writers so damned self-conscious that they lose the improvisational freedom that has been the hallmark of science fiction. This is what happened when we got to the moon. Science fiction writers suddenly became self-conscious; "Gee, yeah, we were saying we could get to the moon. Yeah, golly. Gee, is that the end?"

SCIN: Academics can spoil it for the reader, too. Instead of the student saying, "Gee, I have to have Joyce read by the end of the week," now it' a, "Gee. I have to have Heinlein read by Friday."

HERBERT: Oh, boy. There's nothing worse than telling someone they have to read something to take the fun out of it. You should read something because you enjoy it. Same with music. There's nothing wrong with learning what a particular composer did, a composer you happen to enjoy, to explore the depths of what he did; depths he might not have even known about. You see, the problem with writing a book, or creating a new wave or an old wave, is that any time you get this "labeled surface", it's a surface. Of course, there's something below. The minute you analyze that, you've done nothing more than create a new surface. And of course, there's something blow that. You see? We live in a relativistic universe.

RCM: Gauging by the people I've come into contact with on college

campuses, and other people, of the three or four big cult books of the sixties, *Stranger in a Strange Land* was one and, quite possibly, *Dune* was another.

HERBERT: I don't doubt that they were. I think this is true.

SCIN: How do you feel about producing a work, then sending it out into the world, where it grows into this gigantic entity? Is it like being a father and sending a child off into the world?

HERBERT: That's what you do when you write, you know. This is the big hang-up for a lot of people who want to write. They don't want to let go of it, they're afraid of what it will become. A monster, maybe. I try to maintain a balance. I'm amused by some of the things that are done. I'm amused by the cultist fanaticism that has developed around *Dune* and the whole trilogy. And around Heinlein's work, for example. And others. I'm delighted that people like it. it's nice to be successful. The city of Metz in France, for example, is now planning on a *Dune* Festival—in two years. I don't know whether they'll do it or not.

SCIN: Doing what?

They'll have a science fiction convention at which Dune is the central thing. But if it got too cultist, I don't think I'd go.

SCIN: You might not be part of the cult.

HERBERT: Yeah, I'm not part of the cult. I really am not.

SCIN: when you read a new work by another author, do you have the same sense-of-wonder that you had when you were a youngster reading something back then? Or does the fact that you know most of the writers and writing techniques take away from it?

HERBERT: Well, there is an academic dulling and broadening that occurs when you learn the professional techniques. When you recognize the plumbing, for example, in another person's writing; why that writer did that sort of thing at that point. However, you always enjoy when other people do it beautifully. So, in a sense, you have that new wonder when the imagination sparks and you

get this scintillating presentation of new ideas. That's lovely to see. In that sense, yes, I do have that same sense-of-wonder that I had when I first began reading.

What you do, I think, in writing a successful book is, you have a decent respect for the dignity and the imaginative powers of your reader. You don't write down to him. You don't spell it all out. You hook the reader's imagination, and allow the reader's imagination that latitude which it deserve to create the images. It's a kind of balancing act that you do. I think that all enduring great writing has this characteristic, It gives you real people, fascinating stories, and it allows you to immerse your imagination in it. It exercises your imagination as a reader.

SCIN: I think it's unusual that people in academics will throw writers like Shakespeare at you saying, "Here's an example of great writing; it's endured over hundreds of years; it's the state of the art…"

HERBERT: But it is. it is excellent.

SCIN: But then, they will decide to write for a very small coterie of college little-magazine editors.

HERBERT: Oh, full of buzz words!

SCIN: …yet, Shakespeare was writing for the groundlings and the common people, and somehow they seem to lose track of that.

HERBERT: You bet he was. He was writing popular literature, he was writing popular plays. To really appreciate that, you have to recognize that he was writing in, what is to us, a foreign language.

You have to learn that language and then read what he wrote. Beautiful writing. Shakespeare was a man who did exactly what I'm saying here is a hallmark of enduring writing; he appreciated your imagination.

SCIN: You mentioned earlier that you have a new, book you are about to send out to market. This wouldn't happen to be that volume on mythology you were working on a year and a half ago,

would it?

HERBERT: No. But I don't talk about work in progress, you know that.

SCIN: Yes, I know.

HERBERT: I'm accumulating material on mythologies and how we create myth structures.

SCIN: is it always a new myth within the same structure, or do we change structures to suit the myth?

HERBERT: I suspect that I can detect a long range movement in the structures, the shifting of the structures. But it's like detecting climate. We, right now, are dominated in our myth structure by myth structures that were dominant in the Middle Ages. The same figures, the some personas.

SCIN: I must admit I wasn't startled to find out you are a member of Planetary Citizens. It only seems logical that you're being involved with such an organization that some of this: thought should spill over into your fiction.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I think that borders tend to foster destructive isolation and destructive bureaucracies. I think that the real danger in our world right now, the danger to the individual, is the runaway growth of bureaucracy. Which draws most of its members from unimaginative, fearful populations. The real danger in that is that these unimaginative, fearful populations, when they get into positions of power, tend to suppress the creative individual. Because of the runaway growth data, which can be used constructively or violently, it is becoming increasingly mad… dangerous to do injustice to Ana individual. Because we're fast approaching the place where one individual, driven psychopathic by injustice of whatever reason, can destroy an entire city, or a larger area. Think what a madman in a light airplane loaded with plastic explosives could do, diving it into the Hanford storage area. You'd be moving out of Portland, Oregon very soon thereafter.

SCIN: Do you think repressed people are somewhat self-destructive

in nature when they get…

HERBERT: …repressed? Well, you put pressure on any system, even a hydraulic line, you put enough pressure on it, it's going to break somewhere. And it can break destructively. If the hydraulic line on a heavily-loaded truck breaks at the top of a hill, you're in trouble. It depends on what going on around it, you see?

SCIN: The idea, then, is to relieve as such pressure on individuals since any one individual could be the weak link in the chain.

HERBERT: Or have a concern for what's going on around existing pressures. I think we have to worry about every individual seeking his own level as he sees it, and be ought to have a good reflection from the society of what he sees. We operate this society on an egalitarian myth: that all human beings are created equal. We are not. All individuals are uniquely different. That's our strength. That's our basic strengths; that we are different, and not equal. If we attempt to make all individuals meet some egalitarian norm, that requires suppression and a false interpretation of the gifts of some. Both of which are destructive.

We need a society which is extremely conscious of individual requirements. And a basic individual requirement should be paramount: that any individual feels that he is doing something useful. That's so obvious.

SCIN: You seem to have lot of experience with "alternative education systems". Do you see a light at the end of the tunnel for education, where people are taught to develop their own unique capabilities, rather than, "Okay, we need four thousand scientists by the end of the year," then crank ‘them all into that category.

HERBERT: I have had three children through the educational system in the United States. I have met, in that process, two teachers who were full-blown sadists, and yet, because of tenure, could not be taken out of their jobs. They were sick. I have met more than a half-dozen teachers who were incompetent; they didn't know the first damn’ thing about teaching. ,They weren't really intelligent enough to deal with ordinary children, let along gifted children. Be-cause of the way we have set up our educational

system, as a bureaucracy, there's damned little the society at large can do about this. Except yank your kids out of school and leave the country, which at one point I did.

SCIN: To where?

HERBERT: Went to Mexico.

None of my children suffered from this. Believe me. I think that we are seeing a reflection of a growing awareness in society that there is a breakdown in education. I think the point of this awareness is the growing incidence of defeat of school levies. The people who are in education don't seem to read this correctly. They seem to read it as a threat to children, on the surface, rationally. But really, unconsciously, I think that they see it as a threat to themselves. One of our problems in the United States is that we had a depression in the Thirties. That was a traumatic experience to a great many people who started looking for sinecures, for security. It was so strong during World War II when we began measuring the aptitudes of prospective draftees to see if we were going to defer them or draft them, that the education majors were found to be in the lower ten percent on all counts in our higher educational system. Those people went on to dominate a whole generation of teaching

HERBERT: Yeah, many of them.

Now, I'm not damning all educators with this. Please be careful how you interpret what I'm saying. But many of those people got into education and were not removable. Look at what particular class of educators dominates education today at the high school level.

What particular area is drawn on for most high school principals? Physical education. Most of the principals of high schools are jocks. While I enjoy sports and that sort of thing an much as anybody, you can't tell me that that is a good way to choose imaginative teachers who are aware of the needs of broad spectrum of education for the next generation. They are people who are going to hold to the rules. "Teach by the book! "

SCIN: Speaking of books, do you have any complaints about the way your books are marketed, advertised, or distributed?

HERBERT: I think that some better economic decisions could have been taken in certain instances. I think too few were printed in a couple of cases, and the market was hurt (in a purely marketing sense). In one instance. only 5,000 copies were printed in the first printing. This was sold out in a week. Somebody in New York should have been able read the handwriting on the wall and say, "Well, maybe we should have printed 25,000." The publishing industry also tends to get that bureaucratic fearfulness, where you're afraid to make independent decisions based on what you know about the market.

You make them on the basis of "the way we did it before." Then you're safe. You can say, "Well, we always printed that many for this kind of book."

SCIN: You still don't have enough books, but you have the answer for the man upstairs.

HERBERT: That's right. You haven"t made the profits that you might have for the company, but you have the right answer for the guy upstairs; and they're his rules. He should have passed the word down. Bureaucracy does not delegate authority.

SCIN: Who does the top man blame for all the mistakes?

HERBERT: Oh! He doesn’t make mistakes. The top man always makes sure that he is in a position so that he can prove he doesn’t make mistakes. This is one of the major reasons we stayed so long in Vietnam. It was because the people who were out there feeding information to Washington D.C. got their asses in an uproar when they discovered they'd made some bad mistakes in their reports.

They couldn't change those reports; the reports were down there in the filing cabinets in black und white. So they had to marshal new evidence to support previous positions which became more and more untenable. Now this is a highly successful procedure in the bureaucracy.

Let me tell you that one of the men who made some of the most egregious errors—the most terrifyingly, horrible errors—in lousy reporting of what was going on in Vietnam (and I can document

every word of what I am saying), that one of those men, by the name of Philip Habib, is now the number two man in the state department.

SCIN: So Catch-22 is truth rather than fiction.

HERBERT: Catch-22 works!

SCIN: Thank you, Mr. Herbert.

This interview was taken at Frank Herbert's home in Port Townsend, Washington on July 15. 1976. Additional questions by Carl Bennett.

Frank Herbert interviewed by Peter Sean MacKenzie

Port Townsend, Washington
16 January 1977

*What follows is a verbatim transcript of a taped interview conducted by Peter Sean MacKenzie of Frank Herbert at Mr. Herbert's home. Ellipsis indicates end of sentence or "unintelligible". The 1977 interview of Herbert conducted by MacKenzie has remained unpublished (20 years) due to the rejection of the major periodicals of the time (*Rolling Stone, Playboy, Penthouse, New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly*). It was posted online in 1997.*

HERBERT (to photographer Don Anderson): I have a superb 43-86 zoom that would fit that camera. I picked it up in… I shot a roll with 12 lenses, selecting number and then processing and examining the negatives.

I haven't used it for about… where'd you get the adapter? Oh, yeah. That's the nice thing about that lens. You can virtually ignore bellows factors and use it.

HERBERT (to MacKenzie): I was raised in Kitsap County (Washington). My dad was a whistle punk in the old logging days within 20 miles of here. What's a punk? They used to use donkey engines in the old steam engines and they'd have to keep it out of sight. Over a hill or down in the brush. The whistle punk stood someplace where he could see the donkey engine and he had a whistle and he signaled when they were ready to pull the logs. In those days, they just put him in… he'd be in the third spot. Young kids usually did it. I think he was 14 or 15 years old. It was a summer job. Twenty-five cents a day (laughs).

I lived in the (San Francisco) Bay area for 15 years. I moved back up here seven years ago.

MACKENZIE: In the novel *Dune*, what is the Landsraad?

HERBERT: Well, Landsraad is an old Scandinavian word for an assembly of landowners. It's historically accurate in that it was an assembly and the first meetings of the legislative body – an early one, yes. The Landsraad – it's the landed gentry.

MACKENZIE: How do you pronounce "Atreides"?

HERBERT: What the difference how you say it? Pronunciation changes. Language is a very volatile subject. Spoken language, yes. Written language, not as much. But written language also changes. But the spoken language, my god. Accent, variations on pronunciation – a very volatile thing. So what's the difference how you pronounce it? The only thing I go by is I pronounce a man's name the way he pronounces it. I figure he should know. (laughs) Atreides is Atreus – the family Atreus out of Greek mythology.

*(**Editor's Note:** From the American Heritage Dictionary: Atreus – a king of Mycenae [ancient city of Greece, located in the Peloponnesus, a peninsula forming the southern part of Greece], father of Agamemnon.)*

(Pronunciation) …that's missing the point.

MACKENZIE: What is your conception of "now"?

HERBERT: I think the only way you can deal with a mixed-up time sense which our society has, and a mixed-up sense of how the universe works… – our society today is absolutes. They're an odd list of figures – … is to balance.

MACKENZIE: You're a surfboard driver. You're always hanging ten. That's the attitude you've got. The real question is how you deal with integrating a past with the now, so that you won't repeat the errors.

(MacKenzie cites the popular concept of linear time.)

HERBERT: Of course, you're thinking in linear sense. You're caught by linear time. (laughs) Time is a river… (laughs) Nonsense!

(Herbert regarding his living room bookcase, which contains every

edition in every language of every book he's published:)

That is height of the publication collection. In other words, I have to have a copy of every book. You need it – I may get a query from somebody wanting a certain right to something I've written. I have the negatives right here.

Dune and some of the other books are in Japanese, Swedish, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, I guess that covers it. It's not in Urdu yet. Urdu is an interesting language. Urdu is the language in the world where the first publication of softcover books have the largest first press run in the world. They think nothing, nothing at all, of running five million, 10 million copies on a first press run. The books would sell from 10 cents to 90 cents the last time I was there (India).

If you're buying a dictionary, let's say. We have a four-volume English-Urdu, Urdu-English dictionary. I think it cost 2.50 for the four volumes. Lousy printing quality.

(Herbert regarding present developments on Herbert's estate:)

We put together a development of evolution concept which looks like it was just moved here. And we're moving along with it.

The hang-up that our society has is that our society's full of people who are light-switch conditioned. Flip the switch and there it is. And the world doesn't work that way; the universe doesn't work that way. Our universe works on the basis of seasons and evolution – that is, you may start out to make up one thing, but conditions change, so you develop another.

But we're within our boundaries with the development. We just put a double-use house over the pool. The whole pool concept here is for multiple use. Where you see carpentry, they're solar collectors. There'll be solar collectors on both sides. I intend to use the pool water – 30,000 gallons – as heat storage to heat the greenhouse at night. We'll overheat the pool during the day – we generally swim in the mornings – we can draw 20 degrees from 30,000 gallons at night to heat the greenhouse, with a little radiator and small pumps. We'll even have an alternative of a small windmill to run

the pumps.

I have a plan downstream within the next five years of putting a computer in that little side room in there and running this house off a computer. That is, with sensors at every heat outlet for the furnace. Controlling every vent from the computer, among other things. We're going to put a chimney up that corner of the sunroof with a big Fisher stove downstairs with a shroud over it, and we will put a duct down the furnace. We're going to put a rather strong fan down in the duct at the bottom because fans work better pulling than pushing it. And we're going to put another higher-pressure fan in the furnace system. It wasn't so new a furnace when we got it.

We've cut the use of oil fuel in this house by a third. What we're going to do is monitor not only the big Fisher stove – the wood-burning stove downstairs – but the furnace itself and all the vents with a computer. Computers are beautiful for idiot work, you know – just sit there and listen for trouble.

I know a lot of buildings where they do this. We'll cut our fuel consumption here by at last another 50 percent of what it's been. But our aim is to produce something that has a very high quality of life but a relatively low drain on the… energy system.

I'm not aiming just as you, Pete. I'm aiming at people who make crunch decisions. And I don't want to say something to you that I can't demonstrate. I'm not completely sure about all the things we're going to do. For example, we did a little experimenting with methane. Methane's all right for littler stuff, if you have a cheap way of compressing it. You see, you have multiple energy demands to balance. We drive a diesel automobile. It's an expensive investment, but it's actually the cheapest car I've ever owned. I could sell it right now for more than we paid for it.

It (Mercedes Benz) has the lowest record of maintenance costs in the world. It's the most economical to maintain of any car in the world. The diesel fuel takes approximately one third the energy to produce that gasoline does. You'd have to get around 90 miles to the gallon of gasoline to match me in the… fuel energy demands. The car will run 400,000 miles and we'll have to replace it at that time.

We're having trouble getting a manufacturer in the United States to pick up on our windmill device. A buddy of mine and I sat down two years ago and decided we were going to completely redesign the windmill. So we threw out everything we knew about windmills – "We don't know anything about windmills." – and we asked ourselves, "What do we know about air movement?"

I'm a pilot and I moved right into aerodynamics immediately. He and I built an initial model that got torn down – for the parts, I needed the bearings. We improved that and built another one. We made another model to test a new concept we had involved a way to build a port bottle. But in order to do that, we have a quantum leap in the use of wind for power. No doubt of it at all.

We have a mill that starts producing – well, depending on how you build it – it starts producing useable power at a five-knot wind. But, very important, we'd still be using it, at full draw, at a 50-knot wind. Other windmills feathered out or were torn apart, but ours was still producing power.

We're having a great deal of difficulty getting a manufacturer in this country to go for it, to the point where we're just about ready to go to Japan.

Japan is desperate for energy. We're about ready to go over there and say, "We can't get anybody in the United States to do this. Here it is." I don't want to make a million bucks off it. I don't even necessarily want to get wealthy. I just want it produced because I know we need it.

I don't believe in fission power for the generation of electricity – not for the usual reasons. I would love to build a fission power plant for the generation of electricity. I know we have to find the energy somewhere. I say fission rather than fusion because I'm not sure about that either, but that's a different bag.

Breeder reactors are an act of desperation which are only going to cause us enormous trouble – ENORMOUS trouble. We are condemning our great-great-great-GREAT-grandchildren, many times down, to cursing us. If this society goes ahead with breeder reactors, our descendants will rewrite the history books to erase

names. They will plow up our cemeteries to use the bones to make their china.

MACKENZIE: What's wrong with breeder reactors?

HERBERT: They're targets. We're going into a period of enormous social unrest worldwide. Right now, one person, one kamikaze – I say we're going into the time of the kamikaze. As yet we don't have a means of preventing a kamikaze from hitting his target; we can't even prevent a kamikaze from hitting a president.

Right now, one man with a light airplane loaded with explosives could make the entire downriver of the Columbia (River, major waterway separating Washington state from Oregon) uninhabitable – from Hanford over here.

The thing that really gets me is not that we're going ahead with breeder reactors, but that we don't have anti-aircraft facilities and radar facilities around all of our existing atomic plants. We don't have such defense systems around. It is absolute stupidity.

MACKENZIE: When you say that you have guards and protection systems around these plants, there's an assumption in that, that historically has never been accurate. This is, that all your guards and your protective people – the operative word, ABSOLUTELY – are trustworthy. That they will never go psychotic or anything like that. You're saying all of these things – like, "We don't have that kind of protective system."

HERBERT: Even then, who did the programming? Who did the software? (laughs) What is your janitor like?

What we're doing is committing ourselves to building a system where we need absolute protection. And we have no absolute protection. The consequences of not having that absolute protection. The consequences of not having that absolute protection (**Editor's Note:** are worse) than if we just let it all go to hell and got by without the energy. Go back to burning wood, coal and all kinds of nasty things.

Weyerhaeuser (a huge wood-processing corporation headquartered

in Washington State), for example, developed a marvelous, relatively low-cost system for converting an attic in a city house into a greenhouse, a thermopane greenhouse. A thermopane greenhouse in the attic of a house has some really nice plusses about it. One is, lots of times, even this time (of year) you have excess heat – a little fan will just draw it down into the rest of the house. Number two, you can grow your own winter vegetables and such. So you cut down on the trucking transportation coming in.

I'll tell you the other thing about why we're going to atomic fission. We're being lied to on the basis of the reason we're getting them (the nuclear plants). Great, big, Hitler-type, gigantic lies. The real reason is that you have a fixed market, people who won't use it. Under those circumstances, the higher the capitalization, the greater the profits. So the choice is being made for high capitalization ways of doing this.

Take an alternative example, this windmill that we developed – there's marvelous resource along the ridges watering the Columbia River. Because our mill has high-torque at zero revolutions, it beautifully lends itself to pumping water. We could take downstream water from the Columbia and pump it with wind power back up existing damns and use the existing hydroelectric system to a greater maximum output with this simple windmill that we designed.

The thing can be built gigantic. We could build them as high as the World Trade Center in New York if we wanted to.

MACKENZIE: That big?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. A hundred-story high windmill would be nothing to our model. We could have it in operation in five years. So we could beat the demand (for electricity). I don't see anybody is going to go (for it), given the capitalization system that we have for production of energy. I don't know that anybody would want to use this.

A man in Minnesota who developed a way to cut the use of natural gas for home heating approximately 25 percent in all the houses using it, has been five years trying to get it on the market. It's a

simple damper system. You see, regulatory agencies tend to be taken over by the industries they're going to regulate. So a very cheap, a very simple damper system that would reduce the natural gas consumption 20 to 25 percent nationwide (and it's easy to install; a home mechanic could put the damn thing in). He's been five years trying to get a license. Two major cities in the United States – Mobile (Alabama) and Detroit (Michigan) – tested it and found it a beautiful operating system. It works. It does what he said it would do.

There seems to be a tendency by special interests in the United States to suppress new, workable technologies.

This is why we'll probably have to go to Japan (with the windmill design).

The thing the consumer public in the United States has failed to recognize is that the interlocking directorates of oil corporations, steel corporations and automobile manufacturers talk to each other. (laughs) What is good for General Motors is not necessarily good for the country. It might be, but not necessarily.

I wish General Motors would make a car that I could use. I have a Mercedes 300 diesel. We get 25 miles to the gallon in town and 30 on the road.

*(**Editor's Note:** Miscellaneous data about Mercedes dealerships and prices, etc. omitted from transcript.)*

The problem with propane and methane and the other natural gases is the energy used to compress them. Where methane really shines is in a stationary condition. Let's say you have an internal combustion engine to run an electric generator. Methane is an ideal fuel for that if you have it available. You can take the coolant from your engine, from the internal combustion engine, and pipe it through your methane generator. It just so happens that this coolant is at an optimum temperature for gas engines. It's at an optimum temperature for getting the most methane gas production out of your methane engine. So you have a symbiotic relationship between the engine and the methane production.

You're sitting in one place; you don't need to compress it – you can use relatively low compression factors for storage of the fuel (times ten pounds). It's ideal for cities, for example. It'd be a great way to go. Alcohol may be a better way, I don't know. It depends on the group.

MACKENZIE: Let's take a look at modern day jihads. What lies ahead?

HERBERT: We're going to have a lot of violence and upset. It's no simple, one thing. One of the things that's involved is the information explosion. Computers are going to have more influence on the society that involves this world for the next 35 years, very likely, than fire did. Computers are going to make an enormous difference.

I'll go WAY out on a limb. I think you're going to see biological linkage between human and computer. The computer is going to enter all phases of life, including what we generally feel is our individual freedom. The minute you can make a simulation model of a segment of society, then it's predictable that you're going to be able to refine that down to smaller and smaller bits. So you're going to be able to tell eventually what… you'll have uses. You see, this is not a totally bad thing. You'll be able to tell what the energy demand of the city of Seattle will be. You'll be able to tell the energy demand of the Mount Baker district. You'll be able to tell what the energy demand of Pete MacKenzie will be.

But you will also be able to tell what you talk, how you can talk Pete MacKenzie into buying "X". What are his buttons, yes. Now, the other side of that coin is that, historically, whenever this has happened people have tended to grow calluses.

MACKENZIE: They're having trouble on television right now selling things on television commercials.

HERBERT: Good! (laughs) Yeah. (laughs) It's one of the untold stories. That television commercials are becoming less and less effective.

MACKENZIE: Why do you think that is?

HERBERT: Well, you get talked into buying something by the commercial. You try it, and it doesn't perform the way they said it would. About the fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh time that is, depending on your resistance factor… (laughs)

MACKENZIE: It finally dawns on you.

HERBERT: (laughs) Yes. TV isn't all bad, oh no.

MACKENZIE: But the commercials are.

HERBERT: Not necessarily. It doesn't follow that because some are bad, all are bad. It doesn't follow that because many products are bad, all are bad either.

(Beverly Herbert, Frank's wife, talks about toothpaste. MacKenzie says he uses Colgate, primarily because his mother once said her dentist said it's a superior product.)

HERBERT: Aha!

BEVERLY: Well, dentistry has changed. Many of the new dentists are advising not to use any dentifrice. Or, if you do use any, use a very soft dentifrice.

HERBERT: I was about to bring up the fluoride thing. Human begins are engaged in a long-term, massive experiment, as I call it. We don't know how long the effect of fluoride in these forms is on our systems. Obviously the middle-term use of fluorides doesn't seem to cause any trouble at all. In fact, it's helpful. It's cutting down the number of cavities. What will be in the long term? Is there a genetic effect? Will there be a residual peaking of some kind of physical problem because of this? We don't know yet.

By the time those questions are answered, it'll be too late.

Generally, they have been for centuries. I'm working in a book that I'll publish next year. It's called *The Dosadi Experiment*. It concerns a massive psychological experiment on a large population without their informed consent. The implications are all around us. You see, you can do this in science fiction because you're talking about another world, another people. It's way over there. *(laughs)* The

reality comes back later.

This is an extremely interesting area to develop. A lot of people think science fiction is over, we've done everything. They remind me of the 1890 congressman who wanted to close up the patent office because we've invented everything. He really did. This is a true story.

*(**Note:** A friend of MacKenzie, knowing the interview was to take place, asked MacKenzie to pose the following question. The friend predicted Herbert's answer would be "water.")*

MACKENZIE: What's your favorite beverage?

HERBERT: Favorite beverage? My god, it depends what I'm doing at the time. Sometimes I like beer, sometimes I like water, and sometimes I like wine. You know, the beverage you use depends on the condition you're in. Are you having a fine French dinner? You might want a 1961 Bordeaux.

MACKENZIE: Well, I'm not going to sip Gatorade with the President's wife.

HERBERT: Why not? It might be a hot day in Washington, D.C., and you need to replace your electrolytes. So, it might be a beverage of choice, given a particular condition. All of these questions are really out of context because they depend on conditions.

MACKENZIE: Is there some way we can unshackle ourselves from the agreements we've made with the universe and function more as ourselves rather than as a recorder that just plays back?

HERBERT: Oh, I think we function. We're more than playback. We're more than playback because we have this other thing that's never been really defined – and I hope never is – called consciousness. We can see ourselves. We can even see ourselves as others see us sometimes.

We are products of this planet, in a sense, in a very real sense. We are conditioned by the planet. We live nine months in an amniotic

ocean where our mother's chemistry is conditioned by the rhythms of the planet. We're animals who were conditioning to evolve on this planet.

MACKENZIE: We're not just bodies.

HERBERT: I'm not saying that. That is not an assumption of what I'm saying. But I'm saying this is a factor, a very important factor, in what I'm talking about. The chemistry of our mothers has a very important early influence. And the earliest influences tend to be the most important… I don't think there's any doubt whatsoever about this. We live to the variations in the amniotic chemistry in our mothers for nine months.

You can dig a clam off the ocean beach out here and move it to a saltwater aquarium in Chicago. For awhile, it continues to operate on the tidal rhythms of its origin. Then it gets onto the tidal rhythms of Chicago. It'll come up where there's a high tide in Chicago. So it's measuring the movement of the moon and sun right now. A clam can sense it. We are, as I said one time, bivalves on the tide edge of the universe. We are.

We didn't come by the word lunacy by accident. In major cities, the full moon is when the police and fire departments are most alert, for lunacy. I did a small survey in San Francisco of bartenders. The bartenders to a man – and I got no deviation from this – had customers they only saw during the full moon. They're full moon people.

We vibrate to the rhythms of our planet, is what I'm saying. It'd be unusual if we didn't.

MACKENZIE: What were the contributions that your family made to *Dune*?

HERBERT: Bev kept the world off my neck when I was immersed in the book. She helped me find some resource materials. She keeps me well fed. People call in the morning when I'm writing. She tells them I can't come to the phone now.

I have a very good friend in California, for example, Don…, a

former critic and book editor of the San Francisco Examiner, who used to alert me any time a book came along when I was doing research – here was something I might be interested in.

MACKENZIE: How much research did you do?

HERBERT: I did a year at the Library of Congress. I did about six years on the whole book (*Dune*). I leaned on Muslim and Arab history very heavily. I did an extensive study of Arab history. I also used the Library of the British Museum. I've lived in the desert. I was doing other things during those six years. Don't get the idea that was all I did. But I did the research over a six-year period (from 1959 to 1965).

MACKENZIE: How do you maintain that goal out there, with deadlines being in terms of years instead of hours?

HERBERT: Well, you really are loading the system. You're loading the consciousness and memory and so on. These labels are only approximate.

MACKENZIE: Your coffee is great. I wish I had the recipe.

Anybody can have it. Just go to Joseph Kittay at the Good Coffee Co. (in Seattle) and say, “I want a pound of that.” (Literally, “Frank Herbert's blend.”) We have to buy about 50 pounds at a time, but it keeps well frozen. We have several friends around here who buy it. In fact, the next time we go over (to Seattle) we're going to take their orders.

This is the cheapest way to buy coffee nowadays. It's not exactly wholesale. But you buy it in large lots and you get a 10 to 15 percent discount. Plus, a pound of this coffee – you use approximately one-third less than an equivalent amount of another coffee. So take that amount off the cost. An amount of coffee would cost you 3, let's say. So it's really the cheapest way to buy coffee.

If you want the stuff, just tell Joe you want my blend. I worked a couple years developing it. It tastes the way coffee smells. I did a couple years of research in winemaking, the wine industry. In California, I got involved with making wine, studying it and

discussing it until I developed a wine palate.

Julius (a friend) said something to me one time that really hit me. He said, “In western culture, most of western culture, it is considered effete, and somehow simple, to train the palate.” To educate the palate. (laughs) And that's right, it is. We don't do it. It's economically dangerous, too. Because if you have an educated palate, you demand things from the food industry which the food industry is not willing to give. (laughs)

What we did on the basis of that… (study) was we bought 20 1/8th pounds of coffee in San Francisco. And a little stainless steel drip thing that made one cup of coffee and we had tasting parties. We sat down and made a cup of coffee. And we each had mocha and then we would taste it and try to describe it. Was it chocolate-like in the sense of heavy body and richness that you'd expect from chocolate? Was it thin and acid? What was it? You reduced it to word. So that you could refer to it later. Then we started blending and working on that. A little acidy, a little dark roast, a little Viennese roast, changing the roast proportions. We finally came up with just a GLORIOUS blend that you had to make one cup at a time because it wouldn't keep. (laughs) It just goes to hell in a hurry. But then we got off of that and blended from that with a high proportion of the rather acid light roast or medium roast. The medium roast mountain coffee which is about 60 percent of this blend. Then we added heavier increments of some of the darker roasts. There are very small amounts of French roast, for example. It's for the bitterness, you see, which is kind of an… for the taste buds.

(MacKenzie has to excuse himself and asks Herbert where his “facilities” are.)

HERBERT: Over there. We call it “the euphemism.”

MACKENZIE: Who is directing *Dune*?

*(**Note:** In references to a planned movie based on the book; this is VERY pre David Lynch.)*

HERBERT: Alejandro Jodorowski. He's a Polish-Mexican. (laughs)

He's a great guy. I have seen the script and it's a damn good script. I'll believe it when I see it.

MACKENZIE: Do you think it's going to measure up?

HERBERT: How do you know? How can you say at this point? I don't even know if they're going to complete it. In movie making, you believe the movie when it comes to your local house. Then you made a judgement. Judgements are very personal, too. So beforehand, what can you say? Well, once they start the major production – that is, when they get the actors on stage – then they have to bring me in as Technical Advisor. The last I heard it was being filmed in Algeria, but I don't know for sure.

MACKENZIE: I'm going to bring the entire Chinatown dancing dragon team to be the worm! (laughs)

HERBERT: By Shai-hulud, I think you've got it! I don't know how they're going to do it. I don't really think they've decided yet. De Laurentis damn near bought it, you know. In fact there was a scramble right after we got back from France this summer.

MACKENZIE: Then Jodorowsky must be a heavyweight.

HERBERT: Yeah. He's made a couple of movies that have made artistic splashes: *El Top*, *Magic Month*. He's also pretty much in demand in the United States today.

MACKENZIE: Is the *Dune* trilogy complete?

HERBERT: I thought it was. But now there's a lot of pressure for me to come back to it. I'm not reluctant to do it, but I wouldn't do it JUST because people want me to do it. I've got to want to and I've got to have a concept that lends itself to a really good story.

The thing that attracts me is, say, coming back to the character of Leto 3,500 years later.

(Regarding Leto's apparent immortality:) Not completely, but very long-lived.

I have this theory that heroes are bad for society, human society.

And that superheroes are super bad. Some of the stuff that Kennedy did, for example, is just coming out. The problem with heroes and superheroes is that we don't question their decisions.

MACKENZIE: *(Speaking of heroes:)* How do you handle people's reactions to your success?

The role patterns are very fixed in our society. I taught at the University of Washington for awhile. And the first to two classes I had to shatter all of those illusions. Say “shit” four or five times, you know? And sometimes even worse. You really have to do things that break up the patterns.

I worked for awhile last week to try and get a woman to run for president of the Science Fiction Writers of America. Not because I'm a great women's libber or anything else, but because I think the conditioned differences between men and women in our society are so great that we tend to create, by the time people are 20 years old, two different species. Not that they really are two different species, but the difference in conditioning is such that there are ways of looking at our universe that are very different, given the difference of the sexes.

So I was being very selfish. I wanted that other look at the organization. But I couldn't get any takers.

(Photographer Don Anderson brings up the subject of drugs as a recurring theme in Herbert's work.)

We as a society, as a species, tend to have a very unwholesome relationship, a very deadly relationship, with drugs. There is only one drug in our society where, if you really get an addict and you cold turkey that addict, you are condemning the addict to death. He'll die every time – and that's alcohol. Not heroin, but alcohol.

Heroin very seldom kills an addict on cold turkey. It's a rough go, but he doesn't die of it. But a real alcoholic will die every time.

Also, there are some misinformations in our society about drugs. It's recently been discovered, something that if you just thought about it for awhile – that I did a long time ago and I've been writing about

it for a long time, pecking away at it – you'd see that of course this is true.

If you cannot stop all of the drugs from getting into the country and you capture party of them, you merely raise the price of what remains on the street. And that's our real problem in this country. It is not that people are using drugs, but that they are ripping off society to support their habit and the profits are going to organized crime.

The major source of addicts in our society – three-fourths of the new addictions – are literally created by existing addicts turning on other people to get a market to support their own habits. There's an easy way to cut down three-fourths of the new addictions in this country, and that's take the profit out of it. You don't eliminate the problem, you just reduce its dimensions.

It's a medical problem. It's a medical, sociological, psychological problem. It's not a criminal problem.

MACKENZIE: How would you feel about, as a solution, distributing junk to junkies for free?

HERBERT: Free, or for 50 cents at the local drugstore, yeah. I would think that would be a major way to cut the dimensions of the problem. But, of course, you have transactional relationships between that portion of the bureaucracy which justifies its existence by there being bad people who use it, you see, and they who protect us from the bad people. They're not protecting us. They're making the problem worse.

So you have the… (drug law enforcement agencies) in a sense, unconsciously in league and sometimes overtly in league with organized crime. And the profits are enormous. You know what happened to the heroin they confiscated in the “French connection?” It disappeared from the police property room in New York City.

The profits are so enormous they can buy the sister of a reigning monarch. They can buy diplomats and their unexaminable pouches. The Korean embassy has been deeply into this trade all over the

world. They can buy police forces in the major cities in the United States. They can buy border guards along a whole string of the border.

I mean, you offer five men two million dollars to bring in a load that will make you 50 million. That's a small piece off the top.

And we should have learned the lesson with Prohibition. One of the things we did with Prohibition was we put enough capital in the hands of organized crime that when we eliminated Prohibition, they could turn to something else, which was the hard drugs. Unless you can stop all of it, unless you can absolutely lock up the… (pushers), and get all of it off the street, our methods, if they weren't so terrible in their results, they would be humorous. They're ludicrous.

And the public's been lied and lied and lied to about the effects of the system. What we have is an open-ended system on the price an addict will pay for his fix. That means we'll never discover the top limit of what he'll pay. They'll pay your life, your mother's life, all your possessions – anything that they can get their hands on.

You see, the hard drugs are not the problem. It is the crime to support the hard drugs business that's the problem. So the enormous lies that have been told to this society by an entrenched bureaucracy which is maintaining its own self-justification by increasing lies.

MACKENZIE: What is that bureaucracy?

It's the drug enforcement agencies. They see themselves as a quasi-military police force which is protecting us from the terrible demon at our borders. And they know damn well they can't keep it all out. Every time they take some off the streets and catch it at the border, all they do is raise the price. They put increasing pressure on the addicts to commit greater crimes, to get more money to support their habits.

There are some weird things going on in our society and this is one of the weirdest, because we went through this with alcohol in Prohibition. But this hard drug business is really outrageous. We are creating new addicts. Seventy-five percent of the new addicts are

being created by the system. And changing that system, taking the profit out of it, wouldn't eliminate the problem. It would merely reduce it to more manageable proportions, where we could begin to handle it as a medical and psychological problem.

We can't handle the problem AT ALL given its present dimensions. The unholy alliance between that part of the bureaucracy which is supposed to be protecting us from this and organized crime is THERE.

MACKENZIE: What are your plans?

HERBERT: I'll do some kind of another book. I have a couple of ideas. I'm working on this place so that we'll eventually have a seminar centers. We're trying to be as constructive as possible.

I would like to leave a legacy: a world that's slightly better than the one I found.

MACKENZIE: Don wanted to take some pictures. Why don't we take a little walk?

The ConSentiency—
And How It Got That Way

by Frank Herbert

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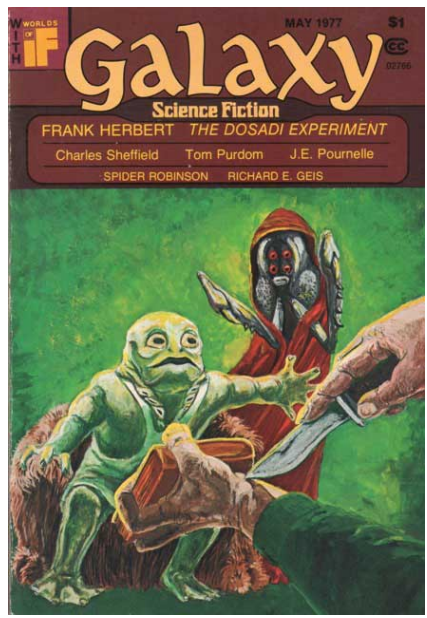

Cover art by Bonnie Dalzell

This article is being written to dispel a myth which we who write know to exist because of the Johnny-one-note question we keep getting from so many readers. I will presently tell all about the origins of Whipping Star, Dosadi Experiment and other McKie stories. First, however, the question:

“Where do you get your ideas?”

I’ve conducted a small survey among fellow writers to explore this question. Here are a few sample discoveries:

Jack Vance gets his ideas from a Leprechaun he trapped with an arcane spell outside a pub in Shillelagh, Ireland.

Poul Anderson gets his ideas from a gross, dirty old man with a Dutch accent who drops by without warning, passes over a greasy table napkin covered with scribblings and says: “Here! Write aboudt dis!”

Harlan Ellison gets his ideas in a plain brown wrapper from Schenectady, New York. No return address.

Larry Niven gets his ideas from words which appear mysteriously on the inside faces of his glasses.

Lester del Rey gets his ideas from messages written in invisible ink on the backs of wine labels from Bordeaux. Not every label carries a message and he must, therefore, sample many bottles before getting the right one. Just incidentally, this has made him a wine expert.

As you can see, the origins are as varied as the people.

I get my ideas from different sources for different stories. For the McKie stories, the origin is a Taprisiot I attempted to use as firewood. He did, after all, appear to be a stubby brown log with limbs short enough to go into my fireplace. Seeing my intention, the Taprisiot proposed a bargain: Ideas in exchange for his life. He also explained that he was extremely low in British Thermal Units.

As those of you who’ve read the other McKie stories know, the Taprisiot communicated with me by a direct mental linkage—mind to mind. This feat naturally did not shock or surprise a science fiction writer. It does, however, explain those occasional times when friends have found me uncommunicative, twitching and trembling in a zombie-like snigger-like trance. This is a necessary physical condition for Taprisiot communication.

It should be obvious by now that I have retreated into amusement to escape that constant question about ideas. I’ll say it plainly: Ideas are a dime a dozen and are never more than a mere beginning. In development of an idea is where you find the story.

Sample idea: Water runs uphill for five minutes in every twenty-four hours. What kind of a world would develop, and what technology would you find, in response to such a phenomenon? Go

design a toilet for such a world.

Then there's the question of what causes such an oddity. (Harry Stubbs, be my guest.)

I invite you to play with this relatively simple idea for awhile before continuing. Just to give you a feeling for idea development.

Now: the McKie stories, no diversions into parody, just the straight quill. (Most writers use a straight quill which has some connection with a goose.)

Oddly, the McKie stories stemmed from ready John Adams, the revolutionary, the constitutionalist, the dogmatist among our founding fathers. He was a tight-lipped, tight-fisted lawyer who was at heart an aristocrat of the intellect. Adams, in contrast to Thomas Paine, believed that majority rule could lead to just as many errors as the most autocratic minority rule. Adams distrusted power no matter who exercised it.

Then, following a pattern I enjoy, I began taking out and examining some of my most dearly beloved assumptions:

That Law will always bring justice provided you perfect the Law.

That the speedy execution of new political concepts and social changes is really what we all need. (Delays are bad.)

That life should be made easier for those we choose to have govern us—they should be paid more, get all sorts of help, should never be frustrated or angered. (Red tape is evil.)

That government should be as centralized and as big as possible to override the mounting difficulties of a diverse, technological world. (Small is inefficient and ugly.)

Now, contrast the universe of Jorj X. McKie, Saboteur Extraordinare, agent of the Bureau of Sabotage (BuSab):

With few exceptions, he can disrupt anyone or anything. His mandate is to protect the rights of private citizens by selectively slowing the workings of government and too-powerful industry

(which tends to act like government, as witness the activities of present multinational corporations).

BuSab originated in a past where good-intentioned people eliminated red tape. Government slipped into high gear, moving faster and faster. Laws were passed within an hour of conception. New bureaus originated almost by whim, appropriations were spent almost as fast as they were earmarked.

BuSab functions to slow things down, to incite disputes between people and agencies. It exposes the temperamental types who cannot handle power, cannot control themselves or think under pressure. BuSab entertains the public by flamboyant obstructionism (behind which there is always at least a hint of violence and viciousness to reflect the bureau's origin). It exposes a deeper reality by stirring up opposition between political factions, and in the bureau's own functionaries you find an outlet for troublemakers.

To keep down indiscriminate obstruction, some agencies are immune from sabotage all the time, others may be targets only under specific conditions (e.g. when they become too big, too powerful and begin to ride roughshod over individuals). Only BuSab is never immune from its own ministrations. You advance in BuSab through successful sabotage against superiors.

McKie's universe is peopled by various sentient beings who function to hold those *beloved assumptions* up to a cruder examination.

There are the Taprisiots, as above, an almost perfect means of communication, but they put you in peril when you employ them.

The PanSpechi, a five-gendered race which can mimic almost any other sentient form, but which often chooses to mimic Human form except for the eyes which remain insect-faceted. The five-unit base is called a crèche and has only one ego which passes periodically to a newly-prepared member of the crèche. They tempt you to think of them as Human, but their thoughts and actions can be dangerous to people who make that mistake.

There are the Calebans. You see them as the visible stars. Calebans

provide the ConSentient universe of Jorj X. McKie with jumpdoors. Through a jumpdoor's portal you step from planet to planet instantaneously, no matter the intervening distance. If a jumpdoor happens to close while you're in it, it cuts you into two neat (dead) pieces. It also opens the way to many new types of exploitation, not all of them benevolent. (Rapid transit doesn't solve all of our problems.)

We have Wreaves who carry the insect analogy a bit farther. They have two sets of mandibles ordinarily concealed in facial slits. One set is employed as we employ our hands. The other set is for fighting and is poison-tipped. They perambulate on limber pedal bifurcations. Wreaves form breeding triads which periodically exchange members, linking triad to triad in gigantic extended families. The poisoned apple here is that if you offend one Wreave you offend the extended family and the result is vendetta.

The ConSentiency also contains Palenki, creatures whose shape is similar to the giant tortoise but with a single prehensile arm protruding from the shell.

We have Preylings, Chithers and Soborips—all deliberately left vague for possible future use. We have Laclacs, supple and reserved creatures who employ tendrils as Humans employ arms and hands.

Then we have the Gowachin, the Frog People of Tandaloor whose concept of Law is the strangest in the ConSentiency. To them, ritual (form) is the foundation upon which Law stands, but Law must change to meet each new condition. They do not trust even their own Law, believing that even the most high-minded people will use legalisms for their own benefit. The Courtarena where they try their cases can be a scene of carnage. The losing Legum (lawyer) forfeits his life. Any jurist or client who makes a misstep can be dispatched. This is a situation, as McKie notes, which makes for infrequent trials and memorable court performances. McKie is a Legum.

Just as the Gowachin have some legal terminology which vaguely recalls Human legalisms, the Frog People are only vaguely similar to terrestrial frogs. They are amphibians who can breathe through chest ventricles when out of water. They lay eggs in water and the males ravenously weed out their own tads. Only the most nimble

and alert survive. (Gowachin characteristics and their Law are explored more thoroughly in Dosadi Experiment, but this gives you a glimpse of them.)

As in Whipping Star where the focus was on the Calebans, Dosadi Experiment emphasizes the difficulties in establishing real communication between sentient species who perceive things in profoundly different ways. Where Whipping Star concentrated on Calebans and their S'eye Effects, Dosadi Experiment concentrates on Human-Gowachin relationships. The new story has characters from the previous one: (Napoleon) Bildoon, a PanSpechi, and chief of McKie's BuSab; the Caleban Fannie Mae, who is the visible star Thyone…and McKie.

There's an additional question of even greater moment, however. What do you find out about such people when you deliberately throw them into conditions of extremis? How's that for an idea?

Liner Notes From
Dune: The Banquet Scene

Frank Herbert
1977

Cover art by Kelly Freas

When you look back at a work you've done and seek to define its essential motivations, the intervening years have a way of refining the original intent. We go on learning, even about ourselves.

Where Dune is concerned, I'd like to show the original spark, but that's now a conflagration. What I can do is take you through the chronology, show you the stepping stones which were the thoughts in my mind at the time.

It began with a concept: to do a long novel about the messianic-convulsions which periodically inflict themselves on human societies. I had this theory that superheroes were disastrous for humans, that even if you postulated an infallible hero, the things this hero set in motion fell eventually into the hands of fallible mortals. What better way to destroy a civilization, society or a race than to set people into the wild oscillations which follow their turning over their judgement and decision-making faculties to a superhero?

This original concept required that I steep myself in comparative religions, in psychology and psychoanalysis, in the then current theories of history, linguistics, economics, politics and philosophy. The preparation took up a large portion of six years and brought me to a re-evaluation of those schools of thought which I studied. Those six years also brought me into contact with many brilliant and open-hearted people who gave freely of their time and guidance. I owe them all a profound debt.

During this period, I was supporting my family and myself as a newspaperman. Early on, I went to Florence, Oregon, to do a magazine article about the U.S. Department of Agriculture project there learning how to control coastal (and other) sand dunes. I'd already written several articles with ecological overtones, but I had a growing concern with what I was learning about mankind's susceptibility to superheroes.

It seemed to me that ecology might be taken up by the ever ready demagogues, that it might become the new banner for a deadly crusade - an excuse for a witch hunt or worse. The faculty for wishful thinking out of which the superhero syndrome arises has not been sufficiently understood. Never under-estimate the power of the human mind to believe what it wants to believe no matter the conflicting evidence. In the very misunderstanding about such matters you find the source of much existing political/economic power. Here is the well from which we draw our fierce loyalties and our blind hatreds.

My original intent had grown.

Now, I had several vehicles for my superhero story — perhaps several stories. But I was still a writer with a sense of responsibility toward my audience. I'm in the entertainment business first. (Otherwise, who will read your pot of message?) And it grew on me that I had to get all of these matters into one story — which is really the Dune Trilogy. I saw all three books as one book, an evolutionary process. Parts of the second two books were written before Dune was completed. The last chapter of Dune was written before I had quite reached the half-way mark in that first book.

Dune, of course, takes you through the creation of the superhero,

Paul Atreides, who becomes the Mahdi of the Fremen. Please focus on that word *creation* because many of the elements which go into the making of the superhero are laid out for you in this work. You have here a kind of distillation of an aristocratic bureaucracy, one of whose unmentioned ancestors is the Soviet experiment. You are taken through a history of many power instruments which have been tried and discarded (or adapted to new forms).

The particular passage which I read here, the banquet scene, is a watershed in the understanding of Paul Atreides. You see his family and his supporters, the malign forces which are organized against him. Raw power is displayed here in its most seductive guise and amidst a scene with commonplace roots—the dinner party, the place where we ingest energy. You see the "good face" which is put upon whatever humans decide is their personal necessity. And you gain insights into the moral base upon which Paul makes his own decisions. All of this is couched in a form which makes Paul and his people admirable. I am their advocate. But don't lose sight of the fact that House Atreides acts with the same arrogance toward "common folk" as do their enemies.

I am showing you the superhero syndrome and your own participation in it. The arrogant are, in part, created by the meek. This is what makes the U.S. Senate a kind of club where the members protect their own despite party differences.

The real division of this banquet scene is in how the competing parties cater to their supporters. In each instance, supporters are used and, most important, maintained as followers. Thus, the dinner party, where enemies sit down together.

The overriding theme of this banquet is “the law of the minimum.” None of us can be completely separated from the natural forces which formed us. And nature is always right, always has the last word.

FRANK HERBERT

* * *

Although **Frank Herbert** is best known for his epic science fiction

trilogy — *Dune, Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* — he has about twenty novels to his credit.

His first book, *Dragon in the Sea* (International Fantasy Award co-winner), is still in print and has just been reissued by Ballantine under its original title, *Under Pressure.*

Children of Dune, published by Putnam's in 1976, is on best-seller lists all over the country.

Dune, winner of the World Science Fiction Convention Hugo award and the Science Fiction Writers of America Nebula award, is being made into a major motion picture.

Mr. Herbert worked as a professional newspaperman for over 20 years on the west coast. Ten of these years were with the *San Francisco Examiner.*

He lives with his family in Port Townsend, Washington — on the northeast corner of the northwest corner of the state, about 30 air miles from Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

One of his major interests is turning his six wooded acres into an Ecological Demonstration Project, with the object of showing how a high quality of life can be maintained with a minimum drain on the planet's total energy system.

* * *

Frank Kelly Freas, a giant in the field of science fiction and fantasy art, has been contributing astounding illustrations to practically every publisher in the field since 1950. His posters for NASA's space program hang in the Smithsonian and he even designed the shoulder patches for the Skylab astronauts.

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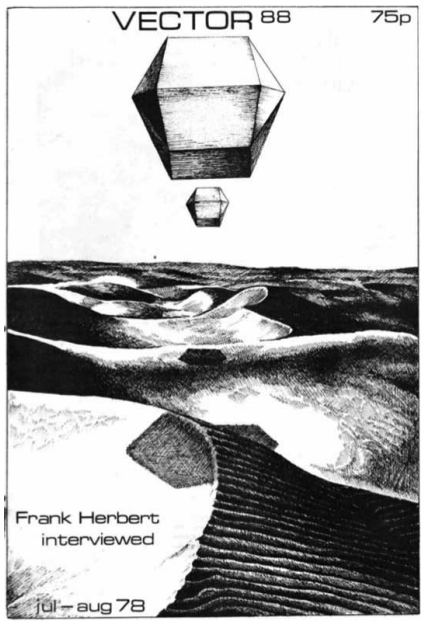
an interview by David Wingrove



Cover artist unknown per editor

DW: You've been a science fiction writer since the fifties. Has it always been your job?

FH: Well, I've been a journalist, I would write my own stuff in the mornings and work the newspapers in the afternoons.

DW: And you're still doing this?

FH: No, no. I haven't been for about ten years now,

DW: When did you actually get into science fiction writing?

FH: In the early fifties.

DW: Was it through just reading it?

FH: Partly. I'd been writing other things—adventure, suspense, pulp

stuff. But science fiction struck me as a field which was wide open. Big elbow room. The imagination could just take off and play any game it wanted—as long as it was fanatical (laughs).

DW: I notice you seem to have a fascination with the legalities of people's behaviour. This is particularly evident in the Gowachin courtarena.

FH: *The Dosadi Experiment*? You know, you can use science fiction—if you're entertaining—as a place to play analogue games. You can talk about racism, you can talk about over-legalisms, bureaucracy, super-crowding. You can say whatever: one of these assumptions that we don't question.

DW: How did the original idea of Beausab come about? Was *that* a natural development of this thought?

FH: Well, I just figured that there was no natural predator for bureaucracy and that this was an unnatural situation, because there are natural predators for almost everything else.

DW: A sort of formalised anarchy?

FH: In a way, yes. A kind of ombudsman with clout (laughs).

DW: Another very noticeable thing is that you take a lot of care in developing different species. I'm thinking of things like the Pan Spechi and even, in a way, your future-Human societies.

FH: I think the whole question of aliens is glossed over in our society, and a lot of it is glossed over in science fiction: and I'm trying very hard *not* to do that. I know I'm not always successful but I work hard at it. Carl Jung said one time that before we could understand what it was to be human we would have to really meet an alien intelligence.

DW: Which would define our humanity?

FH: An alien intelligence, *per se*, has to have characteristics that don't jive with what *we* believe is intelligence.

DW: Can we truly, then, understand what is alien? Because alien is

something we can’t experience.

FH: I think you can understand 'alien' the way the theologians have finally decided they will understand God. By negatives.

DW: Everything that surrounds the gap in the middle.

FH: Yes (laughs).

DW: I read *Dune* three or four years ago, and it's still very fresh with me; and the thing that struck me about that was that everything was so meticulous. You couldn't quibble about it—you couldn't say “*that's* out of place, *that* seems wrong". It seemed as if you had spent years and years just getting the details right.

FH: Six years. And a year and a half of writing on each book. In fact, the three books are one book in my head.

DW: Is there ever plans to branch out from that, or is that it for *Dune* ?

FH: I may come back to it, but I don't talk about work in progress. You use the same energies to talk about work that you use to write it, and I’m very jealous of those energies.

DW: You don’t wish to waste the time that could be used creating?

FH: That s right.

DW: How did you react to *Star Wars*? It’s a question I’ve been dying to ask you, because I saw the film and thought there were bits of *Dune* throughout that.

FH: Well, either deliberately-borrowed-by-accident or not, they raided a great many science fiction stories, I think. But it's hard to say how they did it or whether they were really being derivative, or whether the science fiction itself has become an acceptable part of our mythology.

DW: Do you think he was trying to create something from all the parts?

FH: Well, I saw pieces of Ted Sturgeon's work, Larry Niven's, Barry Malzberg's. I saw things that were *recognisably* out of their stories, find my own feeling about it—and strangely enough I've had confirmation from other science fiction writers, not all of them, but many of them have agreed with me on this—is that Star Wars bored the hell out of us because it was cliched to us.

DW: Who's been writing it?

FH: Yes.

DW: I think that a lot of people found that the actual plot itself and the dialogue was very much a cliché throughout. But some of the ideas—presented visually—at last there was a movie that…

FH: …In the long run I think *Star Wars* will have acquainted a larger audience with things that are passé with science fiction but which are groundwork for the ongoing creation of science fiction.

DW: So you think the science fiction movie takes off from here?

FH: Oh, indeed. Yes, indeed. We've just been building a wider audience, that's all. When you write a novel—a mainstream novel—there are certain conventions that your readers accept. An adventure or suspense film, now, has certain conventions that people accept. They know how these things work and in the U.S. we have been very heavily conditioned by the jump-cuts of the advertising which get a great deal of information in about 30 seconds. All of these things are part of the accepted conventions of the medium. Now, science fiction had not *spread* its conventions over quite that wide an audience,

DW: It hadn't the command of the media, really, to do that?

FH: But now it has the biting clout, because it makes money. So, I only hope that it doesn't become the darling of the academics so that the life is…

DW: Choked out of it…

FH: *Analysed* out of it. People should read it because they enjoy it, and go to the film because they enjoy it.

DW: Going on to a very specific point, again on films. They were making a film of *Dune*. How far did that get?

FH: I've no idea. I'm supposed to be called in as technical adviser whenever they begin principle photography. There has been no information coming my way, no signals that they are beginning principle photography. In fact, the last word I had was that they had put it in the back-burner and probably turned the burner on, So, I don't know what's going on.

DW: And how long has that situation been in existence?

FH: Well, this has been going on more than six years now, There was a hiatus caused by the death of the person who originally purchased the film rights.

DW: You find this a little wearying at times?

FH: Well, I'm going on to other things. I've other things to do,

DW: Talking of new things, then. **The Dosadi Experiment**. It's already, to you, an old thing. Because—the whole idea, from **Whipping Star** and going back to stories like The Tactful Saboteur—how many of these threads are you actually putting together? Are you visualising a compact universe, resulting from your stories?

FH: No, quite the contrary. Not a *compact* universe—a quite *diverse* universe—one with complexities piled on complexities. One which absolutely *demands* of its participants that they adjust to each other or fall by the wayside.

DW: No matter how the adjusting is done?

FH: That's right. That the stringencies of the interface between different civilisations, different alien cultures, demand new ways of adjusting. And, of course, I'm doing other things, I'm poking a little fun at over legalising and, alternatively, over-beaurocracising our civilisation. I'm a devotee of C. Northcote Parkinson. Very much so (laughs), A genius of a man. The marvelous thing—that day on that beach in Malaysia—when he suddenly saw *through* to the truth of bureaucracy; that they don't perform a service, ultimately—that

they become a parasite.

DW: Yes, it's very much an organism, isn't it?

FH: Yes. it is. It's an organism which *drains* civilisation. It could be argued, and with *a* great deal of merit, that the Roman civilisation died of bureaucracy—as much as anything else.

DW: Of having too-neat offices…

FH: It's a kind of disease.

DW: Working in an office you see the forms it takes.

FH: Oh yes…

DW: It seems that the people with the work piled on their desks are the people who are *working* and the people with the empty desks are the ones whose jobs have gone sterile. Though that s not always the case…

FH: No. In fact, a clean desk often means that the person is getting things done efficiently, which, in a bureaucracy, is a very dangerous way to live…

DW: Because they'll start looking for people to manipulate, to occupy their time?

FH: Yes. Bureaucracy eventually becomes a make-work process. I don't know what it's like in Britain, but in the US one person is actually producing something, that is, something marketable—is adding to the Gross National Product—to support two people who are, in some instances, supplying needed services and, in some instances, dragging their heels, you might say.

DW: That's very much the case in Britain. The services section of the population grows and grows year by year,

FH: But the services get poorer and poorer.

DW: I think, as the classic example, the British Navy is always quoted—where it started off with so many sailors and a few

administrators and now is mainly Administration with a few sailors and a couple of boats.

FH: Yes (laughs).

DW: Again, on specifics, as far as *Dosadi* is concerned. I noticed *Dosadi* itself was a world where food was precious as much as in *Dune* where water was precious.

FH: There are lots of things that are money, that we don't recognise as money. Wheat is money.

DW: How much of this comes from personal experience, from journalism, from *seeing* these things?

FH: A journalist, if he is alert and stays in the business long enough, becomes somewhat of a generalist. If you have an active curiosity and feed your curiosity. And I would say that just about half of the ideas that I play with—probably, I'm guessing—come from a journalistic background. Interviewing and story-searching that takes you down strange avenues, you see.

DW: What form of journalism did you mainly partake in?

FH: Oh, I was a yellow journalist. I loved to turn over rocks and look at things scurry, because our society tends not to examine its sacrosanct assumptions and—for very good reasons, I think–wants to believe that people are what they say they are and that conditions are what they are presented as being. But it doesn't take a child or a genius to see that sometimes the king is naked.

DW: That is very much the classic role of the journalist, which is very often forgotten.

FH: And I think it is a very *necessary* role in the society in the United States. I don't know what it s like in Britain, but it is a safety valve, really. Here, in Britain, you have the monarchy to protect you from *revolutionary* change—which I think is a very good service. In the United States we have the fourth estate (laughs).

DW: How did you react to Watergate, then, being very much involved in journalism?

FH: Oh, I think that Richard Nixon was created as much by the people who opposed him as by the people who supported him; people need their scapegoats and Richard Nixon never was successful in concealing what he was. We get the kinds of government we deserve, you know? In any republic or democracy this is true. Very true.
No, I look on Nixon as a very sad figure. He was a product of the culture which projected him, you see. I don't think there was any day in history when Richard Nixon woke up, twirled his mustache and said "Ah-hah, *today* I'm going to do an evil thing." (laughs) No, he did what he thought was right because that's the way he'd learned to perform in a society which presented these things as right.

DW: Do you think there's such a thing as genuine evil, then?

FH: Oh, I think there's a bit of it around. But I don't think that Nixon was genuinely evil. I think that he behaved in the office more-or-less the way Kennedy behaved and Johnson behaved—and perhaps with a bit more moral rectitude than some of his predecessors. *But*, he had a fatal flaw. He was an unsympathetic character.

DW: He didn't have the sort of *persona* that Carter has?

FH: No, he had no *charisma*. And that's always fatal. It's essentially a Greek tragedy, you see. He didn't stand there beating his chest like Prometheus and say "But I just did what *Kennedy* did, you know, and Johnson, and Eisenhower…" And everybody says "Yes, but we don't *like* you…" (laughs).

DW: It surprises ms, then, in that case, that they're actually selling Richard Nixon t-shirts in America.

FH: But why should that surprise you? He's a kind of pathetic figure. People are probably feeling shamefaced. They say "Well, our civilisation created him. Why did we make *him* the only one to wear the hair shirt? (laughs).

DW: Perhaps it's surprising to us because the British in character are very much less excessive. In fact, they're secretive in their own

way and reticent.

FH: Oh, but you have your scandals.

DW: Oh, we have our scandals but they're quickly shovelled…

FH: …shovelled under the carpet. Yes, of course, We tend to bring them out and analyse them and say "well, what did he *really* mean by that?" and "how did I participate in that?" and "perhaps I should discuss this with my psychiatrist?"

DW: Has that ever been a major factor in your stories? I know a lot of American science fiction writers do this. Fred Pohl's *Gateway* has every alternate chapter with a robot psychiatrist. Is it ever something you've particularly concentrated on in any of your stories, any of your work?

FH: I'm well aware of the currents of psycho-analysis in our culture, I was a student of Jung's—not directly, but second hand; one of my mentors was a student of Jung's—and my feeling is that the unexamined assumptions are available to us through our actions—either individually or as a society. What the society does as a whole—if you ignore what it's saying it's doing. Don't look at the rationalisations and protestations, look at what's happening, look at what the 'thing' is doing.

DW: The actual *thing-in-itself*…

FH: Yes, look at the thing. Right. This is like throwing a searchlight on history.

DW: Do you believe in the historical process?

FH: Oh, indeed I do. I think that its complexities are not all that easy yo unravel, but they're there. Oftentimes what you see is only the current at the top, boiling on the surface.

DW: It's very much something that I get personally out of your writing.

FH: I like to get underneath and look at it…

DW: You're showing the surface there for the first, say, hundred pages of a book, and then you're slowly burrowing deeper and deeper till you get to the end.

FH: Yes, that's right. That's a deliberate action on my part.

DW: That's conscious? Yes,.

FH: …I like to take things that everybody says "Well, you know that's true because it's true." All assumptions that we have, when we ultimately come down to the point where we believe it because we believe it,

DW: And not because it's actually true?

FH: Yes.

DW: You say that Jung was one of your mentors—if at second hand. From that, what books do you like reading?

FH: Oh, I read non-fiction mostly. I'll read fiction occasionally, chewinggum for the mind on an airplane, that sort of thing—or under similar circumstances. But most of the fiction I read is on the recommendation of people whose taste I trust.

DW: Are there any particular writers—and I'm not particularly thinking of science fiction writers—who you admire, I thought you might like Hesse, being a student of Jung's,

FH: Oh, yes. And James. I'm a fan of the Irish poets—Yeats, Guy de Maupassant, Po, O. Henry. The incisive exposition of character. And I read a great deal of poetry, because poetry is *compressed* meaning, A great deal of effort goes into putting an enormous amount of stuff in a very small space.

DW: It's been said that the nearest thing to science fiction writing is poetry because you have that density of image. It's not always true —in fact, in many cases, it's *not*—but when it's written well, it's written densely. The ideas are all there.

FH: I have been known to write portions of my work as poetry and then mine the poetry and restore it to prose,

DW: Is that one of many techniques you use to write?

FH: One of many.

DW: Do you ever find you come across a writer's block?

FH: Thus far I've never had one.

DW: Is this because you approach it in so many various ways?

FH: Also, I approach it *professionally*. What do I *do*? I *write*! I sit down at the typewriter, put paper in it and work.

DW: And you revise a lot?

FH: Oh yes, I think a good story has to start growing in the middle, Then it starts enriching outward in both ends, that s when you know it's going well.

DW: So you've never got an opening scene in mind?

FH: Oh, oftentimes. That doesn't mean that the enrichment of character or the drama, the suspense, doesn't take place *after* you begin with that scene, I've been known to write the last chapter of a book before I've completed it.

DW: And work towards that?

FH: Oh yes.

DW: I had the impression that it *was* revised because it's constructed so well that by the end *all* is practically revealed, the things that were unclear at the start are certainly clear by the end. And it has a very hard skeleton, if you like.

FH: A lot of work has gone into the plumbing. I plot heavily.

DW: You do?

FH: I like to know my characters *very* well. I'll make file folders on the characters. I may have a character who walks on stage at the age of 25—but I know where that character was born, parentage,

schooling, friends, trauma, enjoyments, likes and dislikes. I know that person as though he were my brother. Perhaps better (laughs).

DW: Because you can get under the surface, yes. Obviously, as a journalist you are observing people, but are you looking for particular things in people when you're studying them—or observing them?

FH: The nuances which make character are products of so many things that what you look for are signals that separate people. Why does this person behave this way and that one another way? Why are these two people on a collision course? It's a psycho-analytic job in a sense except that you control the psyche to a degree.

DW: You can fashion it. You've admitted you're a Jungiar, How do the theories of Freud affect you?

FH: Oh, I think Freud has his fixations. Well, so did Jung. And I think these come out in what he believed. I would say that his rejection of Adler, for example, was ill-timed and a mistake on his part.

DW: In what way?

FH: Power seeking power is a very strong motive in our society, Most of the politicians that I know are driven by this. It's a flaw in all political systems—that the people who usually get into power want power for power's sake,

DW: As a thing in itself?

FH: Yes. And this is the essential flaw of totalitarian governments.

DW: Their ultimate downfall?

FH: Yes, and the saving grace of a democracy or a republic is that occasion ally we can throw the bastards out. And get a new set of bastards (laughs)

DW: Do you think much changes about human nature?

FH: Oh, I think that the words 'Human nature' is a sort of catchall

that doesn't mean too much anymore. The sophistication of the people who observe their own participation in history and the way others perform is increasing. And that certainly must have its influence on whatever we believe is 'human nature'.

DW: So it's really the recording process that is becoming more sophisticated, not Man himself?

FH: Oh, yes. And computers are going to make a quantitative difference in this because they are storage and retrieval systems above all else.

DW: I notice that there's not a great deal of scope for robots in your stories. In Phil Dick's stories, for example, the simulacrum is *a* standard thing of the future.

FH: I believe we've tried slavery and have found that it is more dangerous to the slave owner than it is to the slave.

DW: And you think that lesson is deep-rooted?

FH: I think it's very deep-rooted, yes. I think there is a hardcore of very sane distrust in most of civilisation towards the free lunch.

DW: Do you think this is a modern thing since Roman Times, if you like?

FH: I'd say since the Middle Ages, but perhaps it's 12th to 14th century. Since that time. When you see factory workers revolting against the automated factory, I think you're sensing this—not that this is going to stop the automated factory, because most factory workers, caught in the clutches of union hyperbole, are going down a primrose path, I believe , that is not going to pay them in the end. They are reducing the quality of what they produce. And this is where the automated factory can beat them. You see what I'm saying? If they let it beat them.

DW: I don't know how it is in America, but in Britain you have this trend now—and it’s a small trend, I admit—to go back to hand-made goods.

FH: It’s getting very strong in the U.S.. As almost a reaction to this.

DW: Of course.

FH: A reaction to the machine age.

DW: To the machine that makes a very nice product that will last quickly…

FH: Not longer but… (both laugh)

FH: …and instead you can make one by hand that your great-grandchildren will be passing on to their descendants. We support that sort of thing, personally, my wife and I. We have had our furniture hand-made, for example, by cabinet makers.

DW: You don't like utility living?

FH: I don't feel that I really *own* anything. I'm a *steward* of certain things and my stewardship certainly will be judged in the centuries to come not only on the basis of some artistic interpretations of what we've done, but also of how the things endure.

DW: Are you conscious of *endurance* , as far as being a writer is concerned?

FH: Yes. Also of the *extent* of time. Take, for example, a science fiction writer who writes a story about 25,000 years in the future. In a very real sense, while you're writing that story, you live out there. Then you come back to this time. Well, these are primitive times.

DW: And you react differently? Do you find that?

FH: 2,500 years ago, if you look back—that was primitive times, wasn't it? All present time is primitive in terms of this kind of time development,

DW: Do you get a personal sense of that in your own writing?

FH: Oh yes, very much so.

DW: When you look out of the window and see petrol-driven cars.

FH: Oh, indeed. Quite primitive. At least, the conditions around me are quite primitive.

DW: It's an amusing concept.

FH: And not only amusing. I think it's quite accurate. If you could be transported back, let's say, five thousand years, what would you find around you? See, you've lived here now—how old are you?

DW: Twenty-three.

FH: Right, You've lived here for twenty-three years. You go back five thousand years. What would you find around you?

DW: It's very hard to visualise…

FH: Primitive timesl Very much so. You Wouldn't have any indoor plumbing. No medical facilities as you understand them. Your food would be catch-as-catch-can, probably,

DW: In fact, I don't know whether you've heard pf it, but they had an experiment down in Devon…

FH: Oh, I know about this. The primitive-living experiment?

DW: That's it. The Bronze Age one. And they've all fled back to their comforts after a while.

FH: Of course. I know of such an experiment in the United States where the people cheated. They took canned goods (both laugh).

DW: Perhaps that's something we haven't discovered about the Bronze Age yet.

FH: I don't think bronze cans would work very well…

DW: How in fact do you see the future in personal terms, not just in fictional terms—or perhaps it's the same thing for you? Is what is in your books the way you visualise the future?

FH: I keep looking for surprises. And I know I'll find them.

DW: You haven't actually sat down to set out the model in your head of what's going to happen?

FH: Oh no, because think that's another dead end. There is no such thing as *the future*. That's a protestant delusion because it says that predestination is *it*, you see. It's *the* future and all we're doing is waiting for it to happen.

DW: You're very much an advocate of free-will then?

FH: Well, in a sense, yes. But more, I would say, an advocate of the accidents of the universe. I really do believe that we live in an Einsteinian and Heisenbergian universe, where relativity is the name of the game. Not fixed courses. We are *not* on a railroad track.

DW: And do you think the rules will over change?

FH: Oh, indeed, I think rules will change. You see, this is asking for absolutes when you say 'rules'.

DW: Hmm.. It's very much against what the universe is about.

FH: Yes, of course.

DW: A thought, here, in fact, which was spawned by something I read in *The Dosadi Experiment*, about getting down to what things actually *are* and people defining things. When they actually define 'that's how an atom moves', 'that's the pattern of something', do you ask the question *then* 'why does it do that?'.

FH: Of course. You must. I think that absolutes always occur in very isolated circumstances. The single rule to explain everything means you're very localised. You haven't moved out into a broader universe. And the same thing is true of what we usually call 'scientific progress'. When we discover something—the way an atom moves or the way the DNA molecule spirals round—what we've done essentially is open up a new door on things we *don't* know.

DW: And people crowd into the room and explore it?

FH: Yes.

DW: Do you think that will be the continuing pattern of scientific development?

FH: I don't see how it can help but be. That's the way the universe plays its games.

DW: Every sixty years people will channel their thoughts into certain dead ends and then someone will break out into another room?

FH: Well, I don't know that I'd put a sixty year beat on it, because I think the beat is different. But the universe continually surprises us, in the sense that things are not what we thought they were a generation ago.

DW: Have you ever thought of writing a novel on that idea?

FH: I use this—I think it's an insight—regularly, but I haven't thought of doing *just* that because I think that again is an idea that you would have to people with interesting people and flesh out in dramatic ways, and that changes the character of it, you see.

DW: But the idea is In the back of your head?

FH: Well, ideas are a dime a dozen. Ideas don't make stories. *People* make stories.

DW: Do you find, then, that you—you've said already that you have files on characters—sit down and look at several files and say 'these are the people I've got'?

FH: When I said that I meant that I will have the concept of a story, the broad concept, the structure, and then I people it.

DW: But you never find you have odd characters?

FH: Left over? Oh, no.

DW: You never get a character developing in mind without a story to go with it?

FH: No. Because I build the characters for the story and the story

for the characters. It's an interacting situation.

DW: Going back to what we were saying earlier. How do you react to Toffler?

The voice crying in the wilderness. *Future Shock*, that is, I'm sure, what you're meaning. Well, Toffler, I think, has put his finger on a human characteristic which, at its core, we usually call 'conservatism'. Now, 'conservatism' is bred in the bone—and I think for very good survival reasons. It didn't do to go out and pick any fruit you saw in the forest and eat it because the damp thing might be poisonous. But somehow we learned that was poisonous, that not, this cures gastritis and this gives you visions of God (laughs),

DW: Or visions of what God isn't…

FH: Or makes you drunk. We've done that with a sort of toe-in-the-water conservatism all through human history.

DW: And hence you get these sharp reactions against it.

FH: Yes.

DW: Like the youth movements of the sixties.

FH: That, I think, is the essence of what Toffler is talking about when he talks about 'future shock'.

DW: So, what he is talking about, basically, is something that's always been there?

FH: Yes, that's right. There's always has been 'future shock'. Yet it moves. (laughs)

DW: Jumping a bit. You say you like poetry, you like reading—not particularly fiction books—do you get involved very much in other art forms? Music?

FH: Yes.

DW: Do you paint?

FH: No, no. I was a professional photographer and still know quite a bit about it, although I'm probably ten years out of date with some of the developments, because I haven't kept it up. I'm interested in Visual Arts—other people's painting and so on. I like nothing better than to get in a good coffee house with a good poetry reading.

DW: Have you found any while you've been over in London?

FH: Not yet, I haven't, no. But I haven't really had too much spare time. It's usually work all day on the script.

DW: Do you take lengthy holidays at times?

FH: Oh, I've been known to take a month off or so…

FH: Fishing. Sailing, I love to race a sailboat, A great sport, I also like to fly an airplane—that sort of thing. And I think one of the things I'm going to pick up on in the next few years is sail-planing. I've already had some instruction in it. I'll get my ticket and do it. I feel every ten years you should pick up something new.

DW: And get deeply involved in it?

FH: It's what you should do. Kind of renew your ability to adjust to the marvelous things that are around us in this civilisation.

DW: Have many things over the last… ten years or so genuinely surprised you in that way? Anything that's come along, out of the blue?

FH: No, I'm afraid not. But I keep hoping.

DW: Have you ever found that after a while your wonder at the world begins to diminish? Or does it, in fact, increase?

FH: Oh no, no. Because I am continually surprised by people and their wonderful interactions and by the permutations of society—that sort of thing. I did an extensive journalistic trip through the commune movement in the U.S. and marveled at it.

DW: Did part of that go into the novel *Hellstrom's Hive*?

FH: Well, it's hard to say that it did and hard to say that it didn't, I don't consciously recall ever mining that, no. But we're all products of what we learn, you know.

DW: Do you ever find yourself recognising things—first of all, perhaps, do you ever re-read your stuff very much?

FH: Not very much, no. Not unless I'm going to do a sequel and need to get into the beat of it—which I did with *Dosadi*, of course. I read *Whipping Star*. In fact, I went right back through the Jorj X. McKie file for that. But that's to build the kind of verisimilitude that the surround has. It's necessary for a story. It has to happen sometimes.

DW: And do you recognise parts of your previous self when you do that? Can you see certain of your earlier characteristics?

FH: Oh yes, partly. I don't know of a writer who wouldn't like to go back to some of his work and re-write it. In fact, I've recently had the pleasure of doing that. You see, what's happening here is that I' writing a sequel to a book and it deals with a previous book—so I don't like to talk about it too much. Collect the energy that's going into the book, you see, If I talk about it I use that up on the tape.

DW: And do you find the books that you read influence what you're writing at the time?

FH: Oh, I'm sure they do. Why wouldn't they? If you gain something from what you read…

DW: You assimilate it all into the mix.

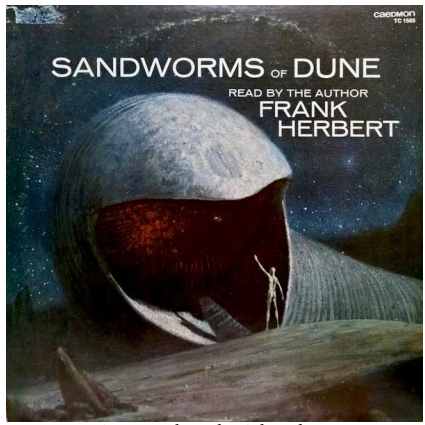
FH: Of course. Ue stand on each other's shoulders, and on the shoulders of history. I'm sure that's true. And always have done… Have you any final questions?

DW: I don't think there are any final questions. At least, I've not prepared any.

FH: That's true.

Liner Notes From *Sandworms of Dune* On Vinyl

Frank Herbert
1978



Cover art by John Schoenherr

Even while he is saying flattering things about my books, John Leonard of *The New York Times* warns that someday my "head is going to fall off" because it contains so many "feverish inventions . . . extraterrestrial theories of justice… moral sinews… *and* splendid entertainments."

Lest Mr. Leonard's dire prediction come true, I will unburden my head here and now of some of that load—namely the myth construction which went into the material in this recording.

The elements of any mythology must grow from something profoundly moving, something which threatens to overwhelm any consciousness which tries to confront the primal mystery. Yet, after the primal confrontation, the roots of this threat must appear as familiar and necessary as your own flesh.

For this, I give you the sandworms of Dune.

They are the mindless guardians of the terrible treasure. They live in the deeps and when they surface they threaten all who come upon them. To those who must live daily with such monsters, however, the sandworms are the familiar “Old Man of the Desert.”

In the lair of this mystery, you learn to walk in a *different* way. You assume a new awareness. Still, this terrifying presence supports your life. The sandworms are the ultimate source of Dune’s wealth (their bodies give up the melange-spice which extends lifespans) and they also produce most of Dune’s oxygen (created in the monstrous chemical dissipation of heat which is produced by the friction of their passage.)

The dragon who carries the “pearl of great price” in its mouth—this is a mythological equivalent of Dune’s sandworms. When you watch the dragon dancers at a Chinese New Year celebration, you participate in a similar mystery to that of Dune’s Fremen.

Here is Erebus, the son of Chaos and brother of Night. It is darkness personified in the passage of Hades. Yet, Erebus is also the father of Aether (the clear air) and of Hemera (day). Incest is clearly stated because the mother of these familiar children is the sister, Night. Another matter stated with equal clarity is that women remain the keepers of the dark mysteries and that men invade such matters at their own peril.

Thus, the sandworms of Dune and the trials of the male protagonists.

The death of a sandworm contributes the substance which arms consciousness for the transcendence of time. This is true whether it occurs in the sanctuary of a sietch cavern or by the natural processes of the open desert.

To use such a substance, you pay the great price. You no longer live in the protective and gregarious midst of your own kind. Now, you are the shaman, alone and forced to master your own madness. You have grasped the tail of the ultimate tiger.

To fulfill its role, the sandworm is one vector in a circular process. Before its metamorphosis, it is the sandtrout, the leathery creature

which encapsulates and withholds Dune's other treasure—water. Thus, the conditions which support it in its new form—it creates the waterless desert.

And what is poison to the sandworm?

Water.

In each instance, the elements of the mystery are intimately related: sandtrout/water, sandworm/spice.

The high value of the geriatric spice rests in its life extension for the users. This, naturally, sets the stage for life-threatening conflicts.

I am saying here that the extension of human lifespan cannot be an unmitigated blessing. Every such acquisition requires its new consciousness. And a new consciousness assumes that you will confront dangerous unknowns—you will go into the deeps.

It's an old, old story. Every *terra incognita* has its own rules which you must learn if you wish to survive. When you remain on familiar turf, you know where to walk; you recognize the dangerous creatures which share your world. The poisonous snakes have been identified and there are antitoxins. In some respects, this is pure myth, but your mythology does incorporate lessons of survival.

If you enter new terrain, however, you are the pioneer, the explorer *and you are expendable*. That is your function when you go into the deeps.

It's no wonder that our ancestors both admired and feared the ones who dared the perils of inner exploration—whether that exploration was ignited by peyote or amanita muscaria or by trials of pain and self-induced trance. And it's no wonder that such fears remain with us today. Our mythology is not all that different from the bushman's.

These elements remain so deeply rooted in Western culture that to profess even a casual understanding and belief in them is often enough to invite emotional reactions—anything from derision to physical attack. That's why I always point out that I don't

necessarily believe in such things; I just write about them.

There! My head feels much lighter.

FRANK HERBERT
Port Townsend, Wash.
November 11, 1977

Although **Frank Herbert** is best known for his epic science fiction trilogy—*Dune*, *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune*—he has about twenty novels to his credit.

His first book, *Dragon in the Sea* (International Fantasy Award co-winner), is still in print and has just been reissued by Ballantine under it original title, *Under Pressure*.

Children of Dune, published by Putnam's in 1976, is on best-seller lists all over the country.

Dune, winner of the World Science Fiction Convention Hugo award and the Science Fiction writers of America Nebula award, is being made into a major motion picture.

The Dosadi Experiment, his latest, has received extraordinary critical acclaim.

Mr. Herbert worked as a professional newspaperman for over 20 years on the west coast. Then of these years were with the *San Francisco Examiner*.

He lives with his family in Port Townsend, Washington—on the northeast corner of the northwest corner of the state, about 30 air miles from Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

One of his major interests is turning his six wooded acres into an Ecological Demonstration Project, with the object of showing how a high quality of life can be maintained with a minimum drain on the planet's total energy system.

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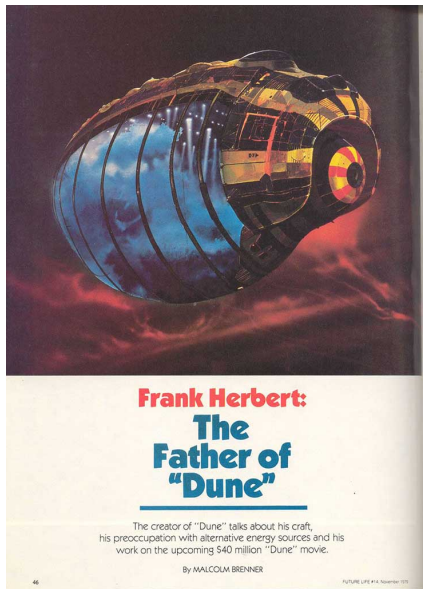
The Father of Dune

by MALCOLM BRENNER,
FUTURE LIFE #14, 1979


Frank Herbert:
The Father of "Dune"
The creator of "Dune" talks about his craft, his preoccupation with alternative energy sources and his work on the upcoming $40 million "Dune" movie.
By MALCOLM BRENNER
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FUTURE LIFE #14, November 1979
Cover art by Chris Foss

The creator of Dune *talks about his craft, his preoccupation with alternative energy sources and his work on the upcoming $40 million* Dune *movie.*

Best known for his Hugo and Nebula award-winning novel *Dune* Herbert is the author of some 20 other popular novels including *Children of Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, *The Dosadi Experiment* and *Destination: Void*. A one-time newspaper man, logging over ten years with the San Francisco Examiner, Herbert today lives with his family on a farm in Washington state. One of his, major projects is to transform his six-acre spread into an "'ecological demonstration"' with a five-year plan showing that a high quality of life can be maintained with minimal drain on the total energy system.

Earlier this year, it was announced that Dino DeLaurentiis would adapt *Dune* to the widescreen. Herbert is currently working on the

screenplay of this long-awaited science fiction epic adventure film. His latest book, a novel, was published in 1979. Entitled *The Jesus Incident*, it was a collaborative work with writer Bill Ransom and based on the future universe created for *Destination: Void*.

FUTURE LIFE: Are you very busy at the moment?

HERBERT: You have no idea. I really should be upstairs right now. Normally I write four to five hours a day; recently it's been eight to ten.

FUTURE LIFE: What's the work you're completing before you begin the *Dune* script?

HERBERT: Two books, one fiction, one non-fiction. I'm not trying to be shy, but I don't talk about work in progress. The best advice I ever had, which I invariably give to would-be writers, is, you use the same energies to talk about it you would to write about it. You should be very jealous of those energies. Put them on paper, not on the air.

FUTURE LIFE: Everyone who has ever read your work is interested in the recently announced movie version of *Dune*. Are you at liberty to talk about it?

HERBERT: I can tell you what I know, but I don't know everything. I have no idea who's going to play what, except that Dino DeLaurentis agrees with me that Paul should be an unknown, somebody who hasn't been on the screen before. We're looking for an important director, somebody with a superb track record. The problem is to find somebody who isn't previously committed.

They are talking about a budget of up to $40 million. It turns my head. I can't even think in those terms. I will be doing the screenplay; the film treatments, the rough outlines, have already been done.

FUTURE LIFE: How do you feel about working with DeLaurentiis?

HERBERT: I happen to be an admirer of his. I don't admire everything that he's done, and he knows that well! But he's a man

who, when he puts his mind to it, has superb ability. He takes shortcuts, sometimes, but he's promised me no shortcuts with *Dune*.

He wants to do a classic, quality movie; I quote, "to rank with *Gone With The Wind* and the equivalent." We've been very open with each other about this. I told him at the beginning I have misgivings about all of Hollywood, and not from any of the classic author vs. screen production points of view, because to translate a book to the screen is as though you were translating a work from one language to another. In a book, it's easy to create new concepts, because the reader can supply all the necessary nerve endings. Like radio; you can build a set on a page that no movie producer could afford. Given those restrictions, and an understanding of the problem, even then, because of the shortcuts filmmaking tends to take, you still have misgivings. One of the fallacies in Hollywood is that the only reality they need to worry about is: "Can you put it on the screen?“

If it's on the screen, people will believe it. In Méliès' day, this was true, but not any more. We have a far more sophisticated audience to consider, an audience conditioned by experiences Hollywood hasn't even picked up on yet. Like commercials. Have you ever thought about the conditioning factors involved in getting people to accept a premise in a commercial?

FUTURE LIFE: People tend to be more skeptical of what's on the screen because of all the garbage thrown at them.

HERBERT: Right. Yet another aspect of this conditioning is the advent of quick cutting. People today will accept the fact that you’ve gone to a different scene because a different scene has suddenly flashed up.

FUTURE LIFE: Will the *Dune* movie expand the special effects art form to capture your ideas, like the mile-long sandworms?

HERBERT: Oh yes. I'm no neophyte in this field. I've worked as a TV news cameraman. I also doctored the script for Dino's new version of Flash Gordon. The original writer was good, but because he wasn't a science fiction writer, he made certain mistakes of verisimilitude which I was asked to clean up. The difference between the amateur and the professional in many fields is largely

an attention to detail. With computer enhancement, we can mingle different layers of action, shot at different times, absolutely perfect in every detail, in terms of foreground-background relationships, the light sources, shadows, everything. The second unit can get a background plate, and a computer scanning of shadow and motion effects will give you a placement format for lighting the action in the foreground.

FUTURE LIFE: So even if the shot was hand-held, you can program the "bounce factor" into the computer?

HERBERT: Indeed you can. And you can relate what goes on in the foreground precisely to the background. I'm talking about an actual scene layout, and tracking motion of the lights, for example, which is now available to us.

FUTURE LIFE: These techniques will all be used on *Dune*?

HERBERT: I've been assured that they will. The essence of drama is that you believe it's happening to somebody. We're going to go for utter reality.

FUTURE LIFE: Your career as a writer began with newspaper work in cities such as Seattle, Portland and San Francisco. What got you into that field?

HERBERT: Natural attraction. It's a great way to get a general education, if you have a curiosity bug, as I have. If you follow up the things you're interested in, if you don’t just skim the surface of a story, it's great.

FUTURE LIFE: Have you always wanted to write?

HERBERT: I started at age eight. I went back to one of the stories from my childhood about four years ago. My mother had saved it. Very childish. Interestingly enough, though, it had all the elements right in the lead: dramatic things about to happen, a protagonist who wanted something very badly, an exotic setting. Even then I instinctively knew enough to put the time of day and season in, so people wouldn't get their own ideas and flop over them later.

FUTURE LIFE: Your books are very detailed. How do you do research?

HERBERT: I call it "loading the system.“ It's almost as though you were putting all the information in a computer, but I don't mean by that to compare the human brain to a computer. You go out and find everything you can about the subject in question.

FUTURE LIFE: You interview specialists?

HERBERT: Yes, on a quid pro quo basis—favor for favor. They put out a lot of time for me, so I write articles or papers for them, do research. I say to specialists: "I'm an expert at organizing and writing coherent articles, translating the esoteric into general readership. And you, in turn, know some things that I want to know. What do you want written? How can I help *you*?"

Even early in my career, people were open and willing to communicate. Part of the success of the transaction process is having a good, clear assessment of what you can do. I have no false pride about this. I know what my major talent is. It's a tradeable thing. You'd be surprised at some of the names that have said, "Sure, come right in." I've had this ability since I started doing professional newspaper reporting at age 17. In a less skillful form, but I could do it commercially.

FUTURE LIFE: Where do you start building a novel?

HERBERT: I begin with the kind of a conceptual overview, which you might think of as an idea, but "idea" tends to misrepresent what a conceptual overview amounts to. Such an overview might be the one out of which the *Dune* trilogy grew; which was to do a book about the messiah impulse—the hero mythology in human societies. Well, that's a very big grab-bag. That umbrella will cover a lot of ground.

FUTURE LIFE: It's been heavily used, to say the least.

HERBERT: Yeah, but not in the particular way I chose, and that's the essence of how an idea is different from its realization. Most people think a story's the idea. It's not. It's how you develop it.

FUTURE LIFE: In the case of *Dune*, how did this development occur to you? Are you the type of writer who works more from the intellect, or the emotions?

HERBERT: I try to strike a balance. It's all right for a plot to have a message, but if no one's going to read it why waste your time? It has to be entertaining. I'm in the entertainment business and I've never, never mistaken that.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you aspire to Art, or should it be termed Literature?

HERBERT: To say yes to that, you have to believe your own publicity, and I assiduously avoid that. The only valid critic any art form has is time. Does it endure? And, obviously, I'm never going to know that--at least not in my present form! I always set out to do the most entertaining job I can, even for newspaper work. I recognized early that there is no such thing as an unbiased approach to any subject. The great myth of American reporting, that I'm just here to get the facts and won't even be in the story, is horse pucky. Every word you choose comes out of your own prejudices.

FUTURE LIFE: Could that same type of thinking be applied to our definition of objectivity in science?

HERBERT: Oh, absolutely. You see, science has built some marvelous straw men. One of them is emotion. Logic rejects emotion… yet logic rejects it emotionally. I say that you don't understand one without the other.

FUTURE LIFE: So where is the "objectivity" of science not misplaced?

HERBERT: When it's doing what it does best-solving problems, answering unknowns. Scientists tend to get on linear tracks which dig a deeper and deeper channel, so they never see over the top. Our nation, our world, desperately needs more generalists. It's a matter of human survival, I think. We need people who are busy building overviews, people who say "The king is naked!"

FUTURE LIFE: Aside from entertainment, is that your job?

HERBERT: Oh yeah. I'm a yellow journalist. I've never avoided that label. In fact, I kind of revel in it. I love to turn over rocks and see what scurries.

FUTURE LIFE: What's your scientific background?

HERBERT: Math, physics, psychology, with some specially interesting sidelines: energy chemistry, micro-climates. Anybody in my field has to know what's going on in research and development. That's one of the reasons I'm installing a very sophisticated computer in my home.

FUTURE LIFE: Tell us about it.

HERBERT: Within weeks I'll have a ten- and-a-half million byte system, and if you know anything about computers, that’s leverage! It'll really be three computers in one, with three different, very advanced chips, each doing a separate thing. It's being programmed by a friend of mine, a superb technician, from the point of view of the needs of the operator, not from the technological viewpoint of the machine. It’s going to be a very sophisticated typewriter and note filing system, but also will time-share with another terminal for my wife Bev to do our household accounts on. I write in the round, in the sense that a story kind of expands as I write it. I get ideas for this chapter back here, or that one up there… I make notes and slip them into folders. I then assemble the complete chapter later. With a computer, I can do that with extreme rapidity. I'm not fumbling for papers. The computer has a sophisticated word-processing program. I'll have a vertical format CRT with a variable separator line. I can have, say, three lines of notes at the top and the rest text, or three lines of text scrolling under and the rest notes. Also a fast-response "address of addresses" system which brings up notes if I forget the address. I won't have to wait to get to a position in the book. I'll go right to it.

FUTURE LIFE: Sounds like the ultimate writer's tool!

HERBERT: It is. I'm designing it as we go along. It'Il have a variable dictionary that will respond to my idiosyncrasies. I tend to talk to

the page. I'm aware that the best use of language talks to the ears, not the eyes.

FUTURE LIFE: The texture of the writing.

HERBERT: … is oral, rather than strictly visual. I tend to make homonymic errors, writing "there" for "their." for instance. My dictionary will flag that. At the end of the day all I'll have to do is scroll through the copy and check everything where the cursor is blinking. Makes the process of correction vastly easier; takes the tiresome part out of writing! I'll just be able to sit there and create.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you foresee such devices coming into widespread use?

HERBERT: A necessity. I foresee all kinds of specialty writing where the program takes care of the incidental bookkeeping. Writing a screenplay, for example, where you have character names and a split page: dialogue on one side, visual on the other. That indexing can be handled automatically by a computer so you don't even have to think about it. See how that would speed you up!

FUTURE LIFE: Arriving at the topic of actual creation, when you get down to putting words on the page, how do you do it?

HERBERT: I look at it as a schizophrenic process. You are playing the different roles of the characters you're writing about, and you'll stop and look at the scene the way you would any scene, and you'll play it on the screen of your mind. It's more of a photographic process. I think of the reader's eye as a camera that I control, So I can move you in close to look at a detail or back for an entire scene. There are not only sights and sounds, there's wind, there's temperature, there's smell—all of the things you would expect in any ambient atmosphere. You select from them, and play them on the tape which is the reader.

FUTURE LIFE: How do you control information which doesn't fit into a pictorial format? Philosophical abstractions, for instance?

HERBERT: We have more senses than our eyes and ears. The best way to do it is through a character, his response to his environment.

Because a story has to be something that happens to people. Philosophical concepts can be made very immediate by the influence of their consequences on people. I was playing that game all through the *Dune* trilogy. We have one idealized version of a philosophy: the great leader will save us from ourselves! My reading of history says that heroes, great leaders, have been disasters.

FUTURE LIFE: So the man on the white horse turns out to be wearing black armor?

HERBERT: Invariably. The great leader has wrought havoc, and that was the thematic approach I took in the *Dune* trilogy. First, build up a very real, imaginable hero, out of the classic mold, whose own intentions are the best. An admirable person. Then show the clay feet as the power is magnetically attracted to him. I think of the *Dune* trilogy as being one book. Parts of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* were written before *Dune* was finished. The plot of all three was laid out before I began to write *Dune*. Our culture demands that the hero be, and remain, admirable. So, if you show the degeneration that comes with the execution of power, this is considered unacceptable.

FUTURE LIFE: In your work there's frequently the theme of people versus the power structure, a common one in science fiction. Could this be because science fiction writers tend to feel alienated from their times?

HERBERT: No, I don't think we feel alienated. We just have a different view of our times. You're looking at motion from a great distance, so you can pick out things that aren't readily visible to other people. I think I have a clearer view, based on the accuracy of my predictions, of what's going on in the world; whether it's an absolute view, I would be the last one to pretend *that*! I only know it works. *Dune* is a prediction come true. Read the headlines. Back in 1948, I was driving an "economy" car and warning people about our dependence on a single, scarce resource- petroleum. The spacefaring Bene Genesseratt culture's need for the clairvoyant worm-spice was written as an analogy to our dependence on the oil cartel, on an energy source that can be controlled by a very small group of people.

The historic term for this is "hydraulic despotism," a term that comes to us from the Mid-East, where water is subject to the control of local tyrants. Now, a cartel doesn't have to be set up with a document or even a handshake. It's a group of people who have a common interest in a common behavior. The problem isn't the Arabs, it's our dependence, and the historical consequences of such behavior are predictable, and usually disastrous. We have the knowledge and technology right now to extract oil from shale, using lasers, for the same prices we're paying. Why aren't we doing it? Because certain powerful vested interests would squeeze everything out of us if a sufficient number of politicians could be convinced they would profit by it. I'm certain some of our politicians are in the oil cartel's pocket.

So I see the movement of forces in our society in a different way than most people. I say things, and people are shocked. Like that the legal profession has raped our society. It has. It has weakened the society to a dangerous point. I get police and medical people angry with me because they think I'm attacking them. I'm not. I'm describing a psychological process. The process of self-preservation, you might call it; the unconscious behavior all people engage in which maintains the necessity for their speciality. The things police do to maintain crime. The things doctors do to maintain the need for their ministrations. You occasionally get an enlightened member of these groups who recognizes this behavior. I'm not attacking people. I'm describing a behavior whose con sequences are predictable.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you feel people's behavior can be predicted?

HERBERT: Not entirely, no. But I think certain patterns of behavior betray very clear consequences. It's the background of great tragedy. It isn't hard, for example, to see the hollowness in statements such as "you make me angry." If I'm angry, *I* make me angry. Every person participates in what's happening to him or her to some degree or other. There are exceptions to this. If a meteor strikes, it's hard to acknowledge your participation in *that*, except for the bad choice of being born on this planet. But there are other categories of behavior which clearly involve at least unconscious personal choices. We have labels for these things: "the rat race."

FUTURE LIFE: Applying this ethic to our oil habit you mentioned earlier, you're actually involved with developing alternative energy systems, aren't you?

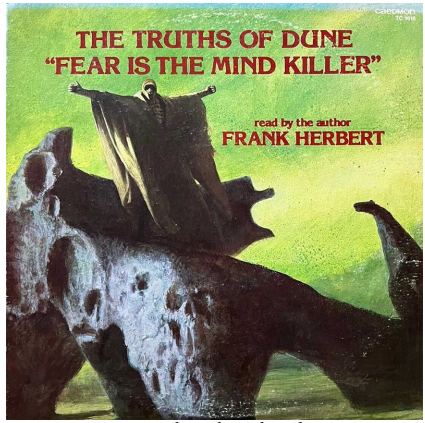
HERBERT: Yeah. I'm having a solar collector system installed in the house and greenhouse that will supply about 15 percent of our energy. With a group of associates, I'm also developing a new type of windmill, based on the squirrel-cage principle, but with some improvements in aerodynamic design. We took a close look at the problem of heating homes and came up with an extremely simple, yet *new* answer. When is a house losing the most heat? When it's cold and the wind is blowing, inducing a wind-chill factor on the building. Well, why not let the wind turn a generator that warms the house electrically? The harder the wind blows, the more it heats, and the heat-loss curve flattens out. We have a prototype of this windmill mounted on a truck chassis with a calibrated speedometer and we make our test runs on the highway.

FUTURE LIFE: Since we're talking about energy for the future, what are your feelings on nuclear energy?

HERBERT: I'm vehemently opposed to it, because it's a damn dirty thing to do to our children. The irresponsibility of leaving large quantities of dangerous waste products for our descendants to cope with conflicts with the ideals on which this nation was founded. The cost-accounting hasn't been done yet, and we'd just be trading one form of easily dominated dependence for another. Nuclear centralization makes shutdowns more crippling, because so many people depend on the energy, and makes the system far more vulnerable to terrorists. I'm for decentralizing our energy generation.

Liner Notes from *The Truths of Dune*

FRANK HERBERT
1979



Cover art by John Schoenherr

When I was a small child and discovered the wonders of a library, I thought I had found fairyland. The words and the pictures created wonderful places for me, led me through magnificent adventures. It was the purest of first loves, better than being turned loose in a candy factory. This was more than food for the imagination; here was the cornucopia pouring forth sweets for the soul.

As I grew into my teens, libraries became even more important. Now, they were the fountainhead of human wisdom. Here I could imbibe the knowledge of others and make it my own. A library was the gift of the ages. There could be no greater gift.

Then I grew even older. I discovered faults in books. I nurtured in libraries my own disagreements with what others had written. But the love affair did not subside. Now, there was a new gift—the hard stone against which I could sharpen my mind by questioning the pretentions of others (never my own pretentions, of course.).

Finally, there came a day when my own writings entered that

stream. Yes, a stream. A library is not a static place but a region of currents and eddies and strange flows. And my work was cast adrift there, partly with the wish that this would be a small repayment for the labors of others.

Libraries represent human endurance, persistence in the face of obstacles. Libraries are still our most profound time-spanning dream, our immortality translated into moving symbols.

This is the genesis of the Books of Dune, those vast libraries indicated in the quotations which precede the chapters and the Appendices. I want that library to exist in your imagination while you are reading the *Dune* Trilogy. It must have substance and breadth and depth. It must point to the labors of countless writers scribbling in their garrets and offices and libraries. It is the human mind at work with the wonder of the mind.

We have been doing this for a long time, and I am saying that we will continue to do this.

Beside me on my desk sits a small black statue of an Egyptian scribe at work on his papyrus. It is a copy of the one to be seen at the Detroit Institute of Arts, dating from about 4,000 B.C. You should understand that it delights me to have this copy *out of the museum* and holding down papers on my desk while I work. There is a continuity here which I am extending into the futures of Dune. There will be libraries and there will be books.

The cornucopia endures.

Such a wealth of literature points unmistakeably to the rich history of Dune's civilization. It is a history well seated in a culture filled with tradition and myth.

Throughout the Trilogy more than seventy-five such books of Dune are listed. It was my desire that you augment the story development through selected quotations from the Library of this future. I wanted you to gain insights which would not be available without those works.

In the first book, everything is Irulan's doing. She is the Princess of

the Pen and the words flow from her. This emphasizes her unique role in the Imperium, just as a similar function is reserved for Harq al-Ada in *Children of Dune.* The one exception to Irulan's authorship in Dune is to be found in the index, the precede by Pardot Kynes, first planetologist of Arrakis. That solitary representation is like a searchlight cast on him.

As the story progresses into the second and third books of the Trilogy, you find more and more involvement of academe, an increased richness of analysis. For which I give you an old Fremen saying quoted in *Dune Messiah:*

Truth suffers from too much analysis.

There's no stopping it, though. As well play King Knute trying to stay the tide. And that is one of the charms in the evolution of our infatuation with libraries. First, the unquestioning love; next, admiration and appreciation; then, the desire to join this marvelous game, to improve upon it.

In the *Dune Trilogy,* all the major functionaries are represented in the Library you glimpse through the precedes. The Manual of Muad'dib dominates, as it should. But there's also a Child's History, The Collected Legends, The Songs, even a Dictionary. Later, there are Proverbs, The Stilgar Chronicle, Fremen Sayings and Tleilaxu Epigrams. There is a Book of Diatribes (all is not sweetness and light). You will find Irulan's secret reports to the Bene Gesserit (all is not open and candid).

These libraries represent words and more words, thoughts and more thoughts, reflections and outbursts. The Ghola's Hymn and the Qizarate Creed share space with lectures to the War College and a work on the Butlerian Jihad.

Where do such riches commonly occur? In a renaissance. And that's the most important message of libraries—no matter what we endure, humans will reflect on what we do and will put those reflections into words. Here is the mirror by which we know ourselves.

FRANK HERBERT

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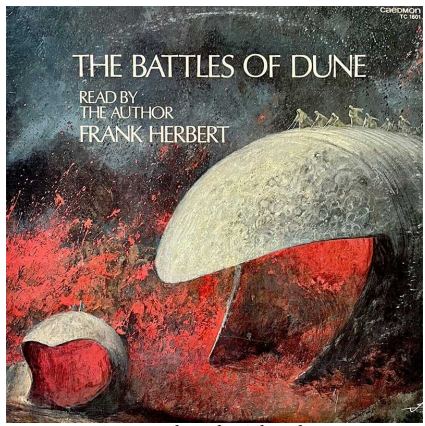
Liner Notes from *The Battles of Dune*

FRANK HERBERT
1979



Cover art by John Schoenherr

Warfare and battles form an important theme in the Dune Trilogy because they are part of a recurrent pattern in which mankind has had difficulty unlearning. I assume war came into human behavior through a long, slow evolutionary process, that it is rooted in the forms of prehistoric tribal hierarchies, and that there were times when it had survival values. But if we have developed any laws of evolution, among the foremost has to be the observation that characteristics and systems valuable in one age can be deadly in another. That is the pattern in the Battles of Dune.

This fits in with another assumption: that heroes are painful for a society and that superheroes are a catastrophe.

Such assumptions derive from the observation that in politics and its logical extension, war, people tend to give overall decision making capabilities to supreme commanders who are imbued with myth characteristics. Thus, you find leaders such as John F. Kennedy and George Patton consciously fitting themselves into a bigger-than-life mold, using the Camelot pattern and flamboyant

accouterments.

Under such superhero stress, forget that the leaders are just another human being and can make human mistakes. Enourmous problems arise when human mistakes are made on a grand scale.

Most people know William Tecumseh Sherman's famous line: "War is hell." Is followed a longer quotation which you seldom see: "I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation."

Sensitive words for the insensitive to scoff at, and written by a sensitive man whose firsthand observations about battle led him to say another time: „You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it."

The Battles of Dune were portrayed in this light. Here, you find the gradations of cruelty "in a good cause." You can follow the good leader. You can cheer his victory, while he has won prepares the table for what is to come.

Cruelty breeds more of itself. Fanatism always breeds more.

Gurney Halleck would have found common cause with Sherman, not with Patton. When he finds that Paul Atreides is alive on Arrakis, Guerney stops the battle in the desert and says of the battle: "It's a mistake. Don't add to it."

Gurney is the peasant yeoman, the dedicated follower whose roots and training led him at times to the cold recognition that he may be an important pawn, but he is still a pawn among pawns. He is the troubadour/herald whose fortunes are tied inextricably to those of his lord.

That is the pattern of all political and military organizations. It is the basis of the spoils system.

We dwell for a moment on the character of Gurney Halleck because his loyalty and cynicism echo my beliefs, a fact which hold true as

well for Duncan Idaho. It is no literary accident that they were designed and chosen as the ones to train Paul Atreides, imparting the cynical eye which he takes with him into the persona of Muad'dib.

Its the assumption in the Trilogy that leadership has its skill, that people can be trained in these skills and that such moment on the character of Gurney Halleck because his loyalty and cynicism echo my beliefs, a fact which holds have always led to unresolvable conflict. Part of that conflict arises from what is not communicated to the followers. The followers must be held in some degree of ignorance at the price of having leaders. Without that star-chamber aura, leaders cannot maintain their power.

As Sherman observed, those who cry for more blood and vengeance act out of inexperience. Gurney Halleck also cries for vengeance, and to that degree betrays his submission to Paul's greater knowledge – knowledge which is not shared with the underlings.

Thus, there is blood on the Sands of Dune. This blood is accompanied by pains and anguish. Battles are an assault on human flesh.

I had that fully in mind while I was writing The Battles of Dune; I had it in mind while I was reading these passages for you.

Sherman was right. Those of us who have seen it, agree.

FRANK HERBERT
Port Townsend, Wash.
1978

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Essay:
Dune Genesis

This essay was originally published in the July 1980 issue of Omni Magazine. It has never been reprinted, and most DUNE fans have not had the opportunity to read Frank Herbert's description of creating his masterpiece.

Dune began with a concept whose mostly unfleshed images took shape across about six years of research and one and a half years of writing. The story was all in my head until it appeared on paper as I typed it out.

How did it evolve? I conceived of a long novel, the whole trilogy as one book about the messianic convulsions that periodically overtake us. Demagogues, fanatics, con-game artists, the innocent and the not-so-innocent bystanders-all were to have a part in the drama. This grows from my theory that superheroes are disastrous for humankind. Even if we find a real hero (whatever-or whoever-that may be), eventually fallible mortals take over the power structure that always comes into being around such a leader.

Personal observation has convinced me that in the power area of politics/economics and in their logical consequence, war, people tend to give over every decision-making capacity to any leader who can wrap himself in the myth fabric of the society. Hitler did it. Churchill did it. Franklin Roosevelt did it. Stalin did it. Mussolini did it.

My favorite examples are John F. Kennedy and George Patton. Both fitted themselves into the flamboyant Camelot pattern, consciously assuming bigger-than-life appearance. But the most casual observation reveals that neither was bigger than life. Each had our common human ailment—clay feet.

This, then, was one of my themes for Dune: Don't give over all of your critical faculties to people in power, no matter how admirable those people may appear to be. Beneath the hero's facade you will find a human being who makes human mistakes. Enormous

problems arise when human mistakes are made on the grand scale available to a superhero. And sometimes you run into another problem.

It is demonstrable that power structures tend to attract people who want power for the sake of power and that a significant proportion of such people are imbalanced-in a word, insane.

That was the beginning. Heroes are painful, superheroes are a catastrophe.

The mistakes of superheroes involve too many of us in disaster.

It is the systems themselves that I see as dangerous Systematic is a deadly word. Systems originate with human creators, with people who employ them. Systems take over and grind on and on. They are like a flood tide that picks up everything in its path. How do they originate?

All of this encapsulates the stuff of high drama, of entertainment-and I'm in the entertainment business first. It's all right to include a pot of message, but that's not the key ingredient of wide readership. Yes, there are analogs in Dune of today's events-corruption and bribery in the highest places, whole police forces lost to organized crime, regulatory agencies taken over by the people they are supposed to regulate. The scarce water of Dune is an exact analog of oil scarcity. CHOAM is OPEC.

But that was only the beginning.

While this concept was still fresh in my mind, I went to Florence, Oregon, to write a magazine article about a US Department of Agriculture project there.

The USDA was seeking ways to control coastal (and other) sand dunes. I had already written several pieces about ecological matters, but my superhero concept filled me with a concern that ecology might be the next banner for demagogues and would-be-heroes, for the power seekers and others ready to find an adrenaline high in

the launching of a new crusade.

Our society, after all, operates on guilt, which often serves only to obscure its real workings and to prevent obvious solutions. An adrenaline high can be just as addictive as any other kind of high.

Ecology encompasses a real concern, however, and the Florence project fed my interest in how we inflict ourselves upon our planet. I could begin to see the shape of a global problem, no part of it separated from any other-social ecology, political ecology, economic ecology. It's an open-ended list.

Even after all of the research and writing, I find fresh nuances in religions,

psychoanalytic theories, linguistics, economics, philosophy, plant research, soil chemistry, and the metalanguages of pheromones. A new field of study rises out of this like a spirit rising from a witch's cauldron: the psychology of planetary societies.

Out of all this came a profound reevaluation of my original concepts. In the beginning I was just as ready as anyone to fall into step, to seek out the guilty and to punish the sinners, even to become a leader. Nothing, I felt, would give me more gratification than riding the steed of yellow journalism into crusade, doing the book that would right the old wrongs.

Reevaluation raised haunting questions. I now believe that evolution, or deevolution, never ends short of death, that no society has ever achieved an absolute pinnacle, that all humans are not created equal. In fact, I believe attempts to create some abstract equalization create a morass of injustices that rebound on the equalizers. Equal justice and equal opportunity are ideals we should seek, but we should recognize that humans administer the ideals and that humans do not have equal ability.

Reevaluation taught me caution. I approached the problem with trepidation.

Certainly, by the loosest of our standards there were plenty of visible targets, a plethora of blind fanaticism and guilty opportunism at which to aim painful barbs.

But how did we get this way? What makes a Nixon? What part do the meek play in creating the powerful? If a leader cannot admit mistakes, these mistakes will be hidden. Who says our leaders must be perfect? Where do they learn this?

Enter the fugue. In music, the fugue is usually based on a single theme that is played many different ways. Sometimes there are free voices that do fanciful dances around the interplay. There can be secondary themes and contrasts in harmony, rhythm, and melody. From the moment when a single voice introduces the primary theme, however, the whole is woven into a single fabric.

What were my instruments in this ecological fugue? Images, conflicts, things that turn upon themselves and become something quite different, myth figures and strange creatures from the depths of our common heritage, products of our technological evolution, our human desires, and our human fears.

You can imagine my surprise to learn that John Schoenherr, one of the world's most foremost wildlife artists and illustrators, had been living in my head with the same images. People find it difficult to believe that John and I had no consultations prior to his painting of the Dune illustrations. I assure you that the paintings were a wonderful surprise to me.

The Sardaukar appear like the weathered stones of Dune. The Baron's paunch could absorb a world. The ornithopters are insects preying on the land. The sandworms are Earth shipworms grown monstrous. Stilgar glares out at us with the menace of a warlock.

What especially pleases me is to see the interwoven themes, the fuguelike relationships of images that exactly replay the way Dune took shape.

As in an Escher lithograph, I involved myself with recurrent themes that turn into paradox. The central paradox concerns the human vision of time.

What about Paul's gift of prescience-the Presbyterian fixation? For the Delphic Oracle to perform, it must tangle itself in a web of predestination.

Yet predestination negates surprises and, in fact, sets up a mathematically enclosed universe whose limits are always inconsistent, always encountering the unprovable. It's like a koan, a Zen mind breaker. It's like the Cretan Epimenides saying, "All Cretans are liars."

Each limiting descriptive step you take drives your vision outward into a larger universe which is contained in still a larger universe ad infinitum, and in the smaller universes ad infinitum. No matter how finely you subdivide time and space, each tiny division contains infinity.

But this could imply that you can cut across linear time, open it like a ripe fruit, and see consequential connections. You could be prescient, predict accurately. Predestination and paradox once more.

The flaw must lie in our methods of description, in languages, in social networks of meaning, in moral structures, and in philosophies and religions-all of which convey implicit limits where no limits exist. Paul Muad'Dib, after all, says this time after time throughout Dune.

Do you want an absolute prediction? Then you want only today, and you reject tomorrow. You are the ultimate conservative. You are trying to hold back movement in an infinitely changing universe. The verb to be does make idiots of us all.

Of course there are other themes and fugal interplays in Dune and throughout the trilogy. Dune Messiah performs a classic inversion of the theme. Children of Dune expands the number of themes interplaying. I refuse, however, to provide further answers to this complex mixture. That fits the pattern of the fugue. You find your own solutions. Don't look to me as your leader.

Caution is indeed indicated, but not the terror that prevents all movement.

Hang loose. And when someone asks whether you're starting a new cult, do what I do: Run like hell.

From *Dream Makers: The Uncommon People Who Write Science Fiction*

by Charles Platt
1980

I have not read *Dune.*

There it is: my awful confession. I now stand exposed as a poseur, a total fraud; I have written science fiction, I have been a dedicated science-fiction fan, I have taught science fiction at college, I have been a science-fiction editor at two New York publishers, I have run a science-fiction magazine, I have reviewed science fiction, and now I have even interviewed Frank Herbert, while being secretly, unforgiveably ignorant of Herbert's most famous novel—in fact it must be the most widely known sciencefiction novel published in America by *any* author in the last fifteen years.

I have read other things that Herbert has written, beginning with his classic *Under Pressure,* back when I was a teenager, and I admire his work. I was a subscriber to *Analog* when that magazine first serialized *Dune,* and I did try to read it even then. I tried again (unsuccessfully) in 1970, when a friend of mine who worked for the UN told me that *Dune* was the most talked-about book among all the anthropologists he knew. I tried even harder, a few years later, when my college science-fiction class voted unanimously to include the book in their reading list.

But these well-intended attempts have been total failures.

Dune—like other massive epics such as *I Will Fear No Evil* and *Dhalgren*—has always defeated me.

I gave it one last try, a week or so before I went to meet Mr. Herbert. (As you might imagine, my conscience was bothering me.) I made myself comfortable, for a long, serious reading stint, with cushions behind me and the book propped up on my knees. I think I fell asleep somewhere around page six.

So, the next day, I read *The Jesus Incident* instead (Herbert's most recent novel at the time of writing—a collaboration with Bill Ransom). I enjoyed that; it was easy; shorter than *Dune* and not at all obsessively detailed.

So much for my personal inadequacies. Now for the shortcomings of this interview. I had planned to interview Mr. Herbert at his retreat in Port Townsend, at the northern tip of Washington state. Starting from Los Angeles, I was going to drive all the way up the coast, visiting other authors en route.

But my time on the west coast happened to coincide with the 1979 gasoline crisis. No way could I drive 3,000 miles, roundtrip. And my budget wouldn't stretch to a multiple-hop plane ride, with subsequent car rentals in each city. I had to abandon my itinerary.

The only chance I had to meet Frank Herbert was when he came down to Los Angeles, later in the month, for the National Booksellers Association fair, where he spent four days doing publicrelations work and promoting his books. I didn't like trying to fit a civilized conversation into such chaotic, distracting events, but I had no choice.

He suggested we do the interview in his hotel room on Sunday at 8:00 am, over breakfast. Now, to me, breakfast is a leisurely meal eaten between about 10:30 and 11:30 while sitting halfdressed, reading the morning mail, and making business phone calls to catch editors before they go out for their three-hour lunches. The idea of being awake and alert at 8:00 am to meet this man (whose famous novel I had never read) did not sound plausible. But I could hardly quibble; Mr. Herbert, obviously, was very busy, and tightly scheduled. Breakfast at eight? Of course!

I remember struggling out of bed at some strange hour; the sunlight seemed to be shining from a peculiar angle, and there were no cars on the freeways. I drove to some weird, futuristic fortress of a hotel, whose towers seemed to have been hewn from gray rock. It had terrifying glass-walled elevators which ran up the outside of the of the building, making you feel as if gravity had suddenly failed, and you were floating uncontrollably into the sky. At 8:00 am.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert were bright-eyed and alert, very jolly and charming, in their weird, futuristic, wedge-shaped room (like a pie-slice in the circular gray tower). I set up my microphone on a breakfast trolley. Our conversation was interspersed with long pauses, while Mr. Herbert ate his cantaloupe, drank his tea, and consumed several slices of toast. A difficult context in which to gain intimate insight into the mind and motives of an author (whose most famous novel I had never read).

But, enough excuses. Despite all the peculiar circumstances, I think the interview went extremely well—even if we didn't talk much about That Book.

Frank Herbert has a Santa-Claus beard and a round, cheerful face. As an ex-newspaperman, he seems very much at ease meeting people. This is not to say he is easygoing, however; behind the friendly manner there are walls of privacy, and a strong sense of separate identity; he very much believes in traditional American ideas about self-help, independence, and freedom from most kinds of interference. And he does not suffer those whom he considers to be fools.

"I'm a farm boy. It's very interesting; you can detect selfstarting characteristics in this society, of various degrees of strength, and they are strongest among people who have had some kind of rural upbringing at a very impressionable stage. When you come to the time of year when you're making hay, and the haybaler breaks down, and it's the weekend and the handy little haybaler repair store is closed, you don't say, 'Well, there'll be no hay this year.' You leap in and repair the thing. You don't even *question* that you can repair it. Obviously you can. My father was a master mechanic; I grew up with a screwdriver in one hand and a pair of pliers in the other—you know, that sort of thing.

"I always had a curiosity about engineering, and no doubt that I could do it. I think that self-limitation is the major limiting factor for most people in the world. People could do far more things than they believe they can. They've been led to believe in these limitations by various factors—the way they're brought up, and

their families. If you have a quiescent population, it's much easier to govern; you don't want a lot of people out there doing strange things, producing new things, because new things oftentimes are dangerous to the people in power.

"I have a standard axiom: all governments lie. Don't believe anything they say. And corporations are only kinds of government —do you realize that there are more than twenty multinational corporations in the world right now that have budgets larger than France's budget? Damn few people ever see it in those terms. I'm with John Kenneth Galbraith: I don't believe we have a free market any more. I don't believe we've had it for a long time. The United States is fussing around over an energy shortage; the real problem is that we have developed a very sensitive dependency, and there's no essential need for this, in the structure of our society or in the resources that are available to us. For example, I didn't have to look very far before I found out that the Alien Property Custodian of the United States had confiscated patents and other factors on hydrogenization processes, from the I. G. Farben cartel, during and after World War II, and those hydrogenization processes plus our present state-of-the-art technology in laser furnaces provide the two essential tools which could get the oil out of the shale in Montana and surrounding areas at a competitive price. We could be in full production up there within about three years, with a resource that would last this nation—even with projected increases—approximately 400 years. My best estimate is that, because of our dependency [presumably, on foreign oil sources] if we set up a crash program to do this, we'd have the screws thrown to us. We right now are dependent for most of our oil on shipments from outside our borders. Even if we could get the program through a Congress which contains members who have been bought by this cartel—this monopolistic group—then the second stage, at the barricades, would be to really cut our supply.

"I think the oil companies have correctly projected the political consequences of admitting this. I find myself in a strange position in that I don't believe in socialized industry, nor in managed economies—managed economies always require a compromise. You build a very large bureaucracy to manage it, and the bureaucracy inevitably makes mistakes. Bureaucracies hide their mistakes,

because people's careers are tied to those mistakes. Therefore, bureaucracies are a perfect mechanism for perpetuating mistakes. I still think an adjusted capitalist system is best, because it breaks down from its own excesses. When it makes too many mistakes it really falls apart, and you have to readjust the whole thing. In an oversimplified form, this is what I think about it.

"The thing a lot of people don't realize is that a cartel can occur without there being any secret meetings in Amsterdam, Geneva, or any place else. All a cartel needs is a common recognition of common problems and common solutions. The oil cartel has been formed that way and as in most cases of predation, it takes little account of the population on which it is the predator. The extent to which directorships interlock between the oil industry and the automobile industry is a much-overlooked element of the whole problem. I've had some arguments with automotive industry people; they say the public *demands* big gas-guzzling cars. And all the while the industry is spending millions of dollars on advertising, to convince the public that the big gas-guzzler is a sexy machine which they've got to own, otherwise they're nerds. What hypocrisy! The analogue of predation is a good one; the industry has never really seen itself in this light, but it ought to. Because, in a natural system, or in the wild, let's put it that way, because 'natural system' can be a very misleading label. In the wild, when the population on which the predators feed decreases, the predators decrease—or they start feeding on each other! I'm sure the analogy is apt. It already happens: smaller businesses are gobbled up by larger ones."

Heavy stuff, to discuss over an early breakfast. But "discuss" is hardly the word to use, since Herbert is delivering what is basically a lecture. And from his style I would guess he has delivered this lecture many times before. He speaks with righteousness and conviction: the lone individual vs. Big Business, pointing out a few "things a lot of people don't realize." But his monologue carries more authority than similar stories I have heard from other lone voices, because Herbert has had first-hand experience of his subject matter. His years as a journalist brought him into contact with aspects of politics, and his self-sufficient belief in repairing his own hay-baler (so to speak) has led him to make interesting efforts at tackling the energy crisis through research of his own:

“I’m working with John Ottenheimer, who was Frank Lloyd Wright’s last personal student. John and I looked at the literature and decided that nobody had ever built a proper wind machine. They were approaching it from what appeared to be the correct direction; but in the last 1,500 years we’ve discovered quite a bit more about aerodynamics than was available when our present model of wind machine was invented.

“We’ve made a breakthrough on the relationship of how you put the wind into a wind machine, and how you take the energy out. That’s essentially what we’ve patented. It involves the physical problem that you have of trying to take energy out of a rotating object when the wind going through it will defeat you on the back side, and the turbulence internally will defeat you, too. We have a mechanical system of answering that problem.

“We’ve built some quite large models. We took a wrecked van—the cab had been badly crushed, but the mechanical parts were in very good condition. We built our model on the truck, because our investigation showed that a wind tunnel does not give you accurate information about a wind machine.” Thus, rather than blow wind through the machine, under inadequately controlled conditions, Herbert and his partner decided to move the machine through the wind, in the open air, to test the gadget’s efficiency. “We built it on this truck, and the local police calibrated our speedometer for us—with their radar gun!—so that we know when we’re going fifty miles an hour. We run it back and forth to get an average of the variations in the ambient air. We built a mechanical dynomometer and bought a digital tachometer, to tell us how fast we’re going and how many inch-pounds we’re getting from it.”

Herbert believes that this kind of jargon shouldn’t bother people; he blames poor education, by teachers who don't really understand mathematics, as the cause of public unease when faced with technology. He says he had very little formal training in the sciences himself:

“I was a newspaper reporter, photographer, editor, ‘hey-you,’ since age seventeen. I picked up a technical knowledge as I went along. You’d be surprised what you learn as a newspaper man.

“You can go knock on the door, and if you’re offering something in exchange you’d be surprised at the big names who’d be delighted to have you there—have you as a student, or whatever. Some of the people whom I have worked for, their names would probably surprise you.” He says this with some pride and satisfaction .

“My technique was to say, ‘You know something that I want to know. I have one talent: I’m good at writing and organizing. If you have any papers you want written, any research you want done, here is your handy lacky. In return, here’s what *I* want.’ You don’t get turned down under those circumstances. You go ask them questions, and they direct your entry into very esoteric subjects.”

However, all of this was tangential to his direct amibition:

“I knew when I was still a child in grade school that I wanted to be, quote, an author, unquote. It’s what I was going to do. I haven’t made comparisons; I’ve just plunged ahead. I saw that the best way to break into the market was through short stories, and did; I made a name for myself with short stories first, then went to novels because they’re more lucrative, and you can do more things with them. But while we were doing all of this we had children to raise. My wife Bev was our main source of income on many occasions; I stayed home and took care of the children and did the cooking and the laundry, and wrote, because the typewriter was at home. She went off to the office, and bought our beans. I find it interesting that our society is becoming more and more acceptant of this; there’s still resistance to it—the macho dream still exists. But the macho dream, of course, originated in very primitive times, under extraordinary conditions. Now, we’re in a transition period, in more ways than one. The military, as an entity in society as we have known it, is dead, and doesn't yet realize it. It is fast becoming possible for an individual to be as destructively powerful as any military force that can be brought to bear in this world. And there’s no way that can be stopped. The computer is going to do no more than accelerate it; and in the United States we are looking at a runaway growth of computers. Right now for $600 I can buy a computer which is more powerful than one I would have had to pay upwards of $200,000 for, in 1962. It is smaller; I can carry it around like a portable typewriter. Most people think of computers

as number-crunchers; they've been taught to believe this by people whose interests are clearly in the maintenance of a monopoly. They've maintained their monopoly by making it appear that computers were very difficult to learn to use, and that there was no way of every changing that. Not true! The computer freaks have already changed it.

"Bev and I are putting in a system at our own place, which is being tailored to us. It may very well turn out to be the most powerful word-processor available, because with the mixing of several chips I'm going to be able to do a number of things very rapidly. I'll be able to go right to any place in a long text, and not sit there waiting for a minute or thirty seconds for it to find that place. Floppy-disc, twenty-one million bytes capacity on four drivers, plus very large RAM and ROM. It'll be mainly for word processing, but it will be time-sharing also, and we'll be doing our household books on it. I have an electronics engineer, a brilliant electronics engineer; I told him what I wanted the computer to do, and that's what I'm getting. He's building it for me—even having the boards etched."

Once again, it seems, a question which started out on a personal level has led, through free-association at the breakfast table, into a discussion of political and sociological macrosystems, and now into a jargon-filled area of technology. It's as if this is the conversational zone that Herbert prefers to be in. I'm interested in computers myself so we go further into the technical details of the system which he is having custom-built to his specification. But I realize not everyone will want to know how many bytes of RAM will be available—let alone the ROM!—and there's no avoiding the fact that it makes more sense to talk about the phenomenon which made it possible for Herbert to afford this exotic technology in the first place. I refer, of course, to *Dune.* At the time of our interview, he has been writing the script for the forthcoming film of the book. Did he ever dream, at the beginning, that his novel would be so successful and earn so much money, in its various editions and sequels?

"I simply never considered it. It didn't enter into my considerations. You know, it was turned down by every major publisher. We have some marvelous letters, rejecting it! According to my literary agent,

if you include the phone calls where they said there was no sense in submitting the manuscript—'We don't do that sort of thing'—there were twenty-two rejections. Eleven rejections in writing, from major publishers."

I ask him if this tells him anything about the publishing industry. The answer I get is more or less the one I expect, from this individual who distrusts large organizations:

"It was an alarming shock to me, to be in New York City. I was a native western boy. who believed that God must be in New York City." He laughs. "Well, let's say, I thought the best gravitated to New York City. I arrived there one time, with my satchel in my hand, you know, and my turned-up-brim hat, staring at the tall buildings. And I was asked to sit in on an editorial conference, to decide on the promotion of one of my books. I won't tell you what publishing house, but it was a long time ago. Before Berkley [his current publisher]. We were ten minutes into this conference

when I realized that I knew more about the market, and what was really happening out in the marketplace, and more about what should be done to work in that marketplace, than these experts who were sitting around this table. I can still remember the feeling of *betrayal*—a kind of a loss—because I felt suddenly all alone. Here I am in this place, they're supposed to know what they're doing, and they don't! They don't know what they're doing!" He laughs: the laughter turns into diminishing chuckles; finally, it subsides. "So we went our own ways. I just quietly pulled out of all this and went on the lecture circuit, where you really have to be up-front, especially at the university or college level. Boy, do *they* unmask the phonies quickly! So I just did my own, and to hell with New York. They didn't know. Their high-level book tours where you go and meet the critics… there is no critic, I believe, myself included, whose taste is the absolute *sine qua non.* They really do not control the market. The market goes on without them, and *Dune* is a perfect example of the truth of that. Do you know that *Dune* was panned by every critic?"

I admit that, actually. I didn't know.

"Not one liked it," says Herbert.

“After a long time, Arthur Clarke sent us a review from India that was good,” his wife reminds him.

He nods. “Bev is right. And here and there you might get a little crossroads newspaper in Ohio, with a young reviewer who probably went to the local junior college, and they liked it.”

Has Herbert received a satisfying audience response from his readers?

“The feedback has been very rewarding. Because of the kinds of questions I get, I’ve been able to direct attention straight at what I was doing, and there’s no equivocation about it. People say, for example, ‘Were you forming a cult?’ and I say, for the love of God, no! Quite the opposite—don’t follow *me*! Cult leaders have feet of clay, if not worse. They lead 900 people into suicide; they lead their followers into the coliseum where they get to be eaten by lions. What insanity! Really. I have an initial: G.P.M.F.F.— God preserve me from fanatics.

“The bottom line in the *Dune* trilogy is: beware of heroes. Much better to rely on your own judgment, and your own mistakes.”

A fitting note to end on. We have finished breakfast; I’m sure Mr. Herbert could talk for at least another hour on aspects of politics, business, and technology, but he has to move on to the book fair, where he will be autographing Dune and his other books, and generally oiling the machinery of media-commerce.

As a writer, at least, he has proved that the lone individual can exercise better judgment that those people who are suppose to be experts. Whether this ability really extends into other areas— such as developing alternative energy sources—has yet to be demonstrated as convincingly. In the meantime, it must be immensely satisfying to Frank Herbert that his book has been such an immense success, despite the failings of an unnamed New York publisher and the scorn of all those critics.

(Los Angeles, May 1979)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Frank Herbert's first novel, *Under Pressure* (also titled *The Dragon in the Sea* and *Twenty-First Century Sub)* was published in 1956. It is a complicated psychological thriller, set in the claustrophobic space of a technologically advanced submarine. The writing is tense and effective. "Dune World" was a serial in *Analog* (1963-1964), later combined with "The Prophet of Dune" and published as *Dune* (1965); it won both the Hugo and Nebula award as best novel. It is an extremely long and detailed study of religion, ecology, interstellar politics, and war. Sequels *Dune Messiah* (1969) and *Children of Dune* (1976) are still not the end of the story.

Some readers (a minority, it seems) prefer Herbert's other work, especially his short fiction in *The Best of Frank Herbert* (1975) and novels such as *The Dosadi Experiment* (1977), which manages to combine a great variety of elements, including many alien species whose life processes are described in detail; the effects of an experiment in overpopulation; advanced psychic powers (including mind-transference in the central characters); and a complex plot.

Science Fiction—A Review of Speculative Literature

BY Terry Dowling, Keith Curtis and Joseph Nicolas with Rob McGough and Helen Swift,
A Review of Speculative Literature, 09/1981

On 6th and 7th June 1981, Oberoi Hotel, Adelaide; Advention '81

SF: A general question to begin: what's your view of the purpose of science fiction?

HERBERT: Well, to entertain. To ask the questions that aren't being asked any where else. I think it has a scientific function in asking the hard questions. We'll ask those questions that aren't being asked elsewhere. They're fair game for us. What if ecology breaks down? What if this kind of a society develops? Or what if we get a particularly obtrusive police state—the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thing? None of these stories, I believe, prevents those evolutionary or devolutionary processes, but they sure as hell alert us to what's happening. Whole terms have come into the language now—Big Brother, and so on.

SF: It was your use of the word "ecology" in novels as different as *Dune* and *The Dragon in the Sea* that made me look up its full meaning as that: "Branch of biology dealing with living organisms' habits, modes of life, and relations to their surroundings."

HERBERT: Have you ever thought of this room as a natural setting?

SF: You made me do so when Captain Sparrow talked about the inside of the *Fenian Ram* as an "enveloped world with its own special ecology", and Leto II referred to his future dynasty as "an ecosystem in miniature." I'd never thought about it like that before. I hadn't realized that people interacting in any closed environment.

HERBERT: Not just closed environment; in any environment! We live in a technological world and there's a feedback system going on. We are inventing things, making things, and they are having an

influence on us and our societies. You can break it down. We have political ecology, social ecology, religious ecology, you just go right on. The systems have their interacting feedbacks.

SF: You have a recurring theme of survival, of humanity being tested and put under stress and forced to confront what is basic to it, forced even to consider the fact that it's in a crisis situation all the time—a fact so often overlooked.

HERBERT: Yes, well we really are, all the time. Maybe not under as much stress sometimes as at other times, but all the time. I can give you a few instances. I don't know whether it's the same in Australia as in the U.S.

I suspect it is—but when you get into your automobile in the U.S. and start driving, your blood pressure goes up dramatically. Detroit spent quite a bit of money discovering that if you got in your car, turned on the ignition to start the motor, and eight seconds later the motor's not running, your blood pressure goes right up. You have eight seconds. Now I'm sure that's a conditioned reaction; the technological toy has conditioned us. Because I know damn well that if my grandfather didn't get the harness on the horse in eight seconds, his blood pressure didn't go up. Maybe if he didn't have the horse harnessed in five minutes and the horse was spirited and skittish, his blood pressure probably went up then. But it's a different feedback system.

SF: In *Children of Dune*, Leto II refers to the various mystiques behind any civilization which act as barriers against change: “the religious mystique, the hero-leader mystique, the messiah mystique, the mystique of science/technology, and the mystique of nature itself.” These things are seen as barriers, while a lot of cultures would actively support the idea that they are a part and parcel of a normal healthy growth. Do you see these things as limitations?

HERBERT: No. I see that some societies look at them as limitations, especially Western cultures. Another thing happens, too. If you think you know, it tends to prevent you from asking questions. And the mystique of thinking you know, of course, is all bound up in other things—the guilt of ignorance, “I don't want to look stupid” (Laughter)…

SF: You make a great case for survival all the time. You come across as a true optimist.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I would like to believe that there will be human beings millions of years from now, enjoying life the way we enjoy it or to the extent that they're capable of enjoying it then. Alive and enjoying it, you see.

SF: Given this optimism, does the present political situation hold any fears or terrors for you at all?

HERBERT: Of course. The speech this afternoon about the arms race—that situation worries me. I think that the speaker did not bring in all the peripheral factors that he should be bringing in. He has limited it. He made a very narrow approach to the atomic threat—that particular aspect of an arms race and how it controls what's built. But he doesn't talk at all about the obvious stupidity of building enormous naval vessels at a time such as this. And the very fact that these are built cannot be passed over as the admirals' preparing to fight the next war on the basis of the last one, it really cannot be passed over that way. It really focuses your attention on the fact that the arms race is an economic thing.

SF: The building of battleships provides employment…

HERBERT: That's right. And it provides jobs for admirals and captains and commanders, you see .(Laughter)

SF: It is interesting to note that *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, edited by Peter Nicholls, says there has been “remarkably little critical analysis” of your work. Why do you think that might be?

HERBERT: I haven't any idea.

SF: Considering the very real impact your work has made on the genre, does it disappoint you that you haven't been discussed more?

HERBERT: Not at all. I kind of have a leaning towards keeping science fiction in the gutter where it belongs. (Laughter) It's an emotional leaning. I think we have a lot of fun with it, you see. In addition to having fun, I think I'm prodding the guy next to me and

saying: “Hey, the king’s naked!” (Laughter)

SF: You feel the academic tendency in recent years tends to kill it?

HERBERT: The academic tendency is to analyse the life out of it. And analysing the fun out of it, too: I want a report on Thursday… (Laughter)

SF: Your work is very well known, is generally accepted and cherished. People find that they can relate to your books very much. Your novel *Dune* makes a great first book for novice readers of science fiction. And yet, especially considering the nature of the academic trend, there has been this lack of critical attention from even those who normally are first to play the game of analysis.

HERBERT: Oh, yeah, Will McNelly has done it. But Will is a heretic anyway. (Laughter) The fact that it doesn't happen doesn't bother me, really doesn't bother me. There are some among my contemporaries who are bothered by that in their own work and are also bothered by the failure of the establishment literati to give them the status they feel they deserve. I think this was Kurt Vonnegut's problem. I know damn well it was Bob Silverberg's problem because he said so. My own approach to this is that it's a waste of energy to bother with that. Do your thing. And as long as you are enjoying it, do it!

SF: (Going on from that) you're obviously writing the books you enjoy. When you actually sit down to write, do you write a book more for yourself than for the audience, or do you write for a particular group of readers?

HERBERT: I have a kind of amorphous sense of an audience out there and I really care about that audience, I really do. I want them to be entertained. I want to give them the frosting on the cake. I want all these good experiences to come out in it. I sort of see myself as the jongleur who comes into the castle to sing for his supper, telling about the other castle down the highway. And, my God, people pay me for it. What a marvelous thing!

SF: How do you feel about doing humorous material? *Whipping Star* was an immensely enjoyable book at the humorous level.

HERBERT: I had a lot of fun doing that. If I can get it in, I do it. But you've got to be careful with humor because it can become too ham-handed and it will destroy that sense of involvement in the story. And that's really a primary concern. You want the people to be entertained, to be involved in the story. You want them in the page just as a good movie maker wants people in that screen.

SF: Which books would you be most satisfied with? Your personal favourites?

HERBERT: I'm delighted with some books which are sixth ball in the side pocket type of things. One of them is *Soul Catcher*. Another one is *The Santaroga Barrier*. I wanted to do a particular kind of book there. I was infatuated with the idea of the utopia-dystopia dichotomy. One man's utopia is another's dystopia, you see. And I'd set out to write a book that would split the readership just about in half. About half of them would think I was writing about a utopia; and about half would think I was writing about dystopia. And it was *the Lady or the Tiger*. I was really doing it deliberately, sort of snickering to myself as I did it. But I really designed that book to do that, and just about half of my fan mail says: “Oh boy, I'd love to live there”, and about half of it says: “Good God, what an awful place!” Fine. That's exactly what I set out to do, you see. It's very satisfying to design a book that way, to really set out to do that kind of story then have it do that.

SF: Do you ever find that you lose control and that the novel writes itself?

HERBERT: Oh, all the novels write themselves to some degree. That's marvelous, when the characters take over. But the design, the outline, the pattern of the book, to do a particular thing, that's something else.

SF: Are there books of yours you'd actually like to go back and rewrite?

HERBERT: Some of them are not as well written as others. But it's like yesterday's news. You feel you've grown beyond that and you know you'd be able to do a better job now. But there are so many new ideas coming on that you'd like to deal with, that the ones

behind you stand on their own. I give any book I'm working on one hundred per cent. I'm in that world when I'm writing it, and I would hope that the one hundred per cent would change as the years go on, that you have more of a one hundred per cent to give the next time.

SF: How did this one hundred per cent apply with the collaboration you did with Bill Ransom on *The Jesus Incident*?

HERBERT: An eerie experience! The way that happened was that Bill came to me and he wanted me to do a sequel to *Destination: Void*. He had ideas about it. He said: You could do this and you could do that and you could do this other thing. And I was very heavily pressed with deadlines at the moment and I didn't have time to do it. I was talking to Bill about it—he's a very close friend—and I suddenly said: "Hey, would you like to collaborate with me on doing a sequel?". And Bill said: "God, I don't know. I don't know if we could work together". And I said: "I don't know either. But we could try it." So we kind of outlined a story, and that was fun, and before we knew it we were working together. It worked well. And I got in touch with my agent and talked to New York. They were a little queasy about it, about Bill Ransom. And there were other considerations. I insisted that there be equal play on the names and that the contract be an equal split, because you don't write a collaboration and have one person be a second-class citizen. So we finally got our contract and everything was fine, and we started writing the story. We were leap-frogging. Bill would do one chapter and I'd do the other. I did the first chapter and Bill did the second, and so on. Then we came back and re-wrote each other to add uniformity of style, and even Bev has trouble really seeing which passages I wrote and which passages Bill wrote.

BEV: Yes, I can't tell.

HERBERT: But the spooky thing was that we began getting into each other's heads. In one instance, each of us introduced a character in succeeding chapters. Bill had the first chapter with this character in it and I had the second one. We named this character, gave her the same name, and these two chapters just dovetailed. That character just went right on, and we had no previous collaboration, no consultation on naming the character or the

sequence. Bill just came on a situation where we needed another character and he put that other character in, named her, and I used the same name and had that character in the next chapter. We came back at the end of the week on our regular Friday consultation and looked at that and both of us got spooked. (Laughter) And it happened not just once but several times. There were other coincidences that happened this way all through the book. It was as though we were on some kind of a wavelength. Bev kept commenting on it.

BEV: It was eerie, yes.

HERBERT: It was really eerie! We finished the book, mailed it off to New York, everybody's happy, and then Bill and I each broke a little finger. (Laughter) It was spooky. We're going to do another one this winter, a sequel to *The Jesus Incident*. This one we'll do a little bit differently because I've got another book to finish when I get back and I won't get at what Bill has done until this winter. We plotted the story together, but Bill is taking off on his own and doing any number of things according to the outline and the plot that we developed. He's not completing the book and he won't have it all fleshed out. But he'll have some sketchy outlines and some sample chapters, and I'll get it probably in November sometime and do my bit.

SF: Your ideas and his must dovetail, too.

HERBERT: We work well together. We enjoy the same things. In fact, Bev complains and says: “You're always laughing up there and I want to know what you're laughing about!”

SF: The new book you're currently working on: does it have a title yet?

HERBERT: No. And you've probably heard that I don't talk about work in progress, mainly because you use the same energies to talk about the work that you use to write it, and you want to save that energy for the paper. That's really good advice. If there are any would-be writers around, tell them this, because I've seen more and more writers who go tell their best friend the story and you never see the story. And that's a waste.

SF: It's like what Ray Bradbury said in an introduction to a short story collection by Henry Kuttner. He said that back in the forties Henry Kuttner told him to shut up because he was talking about story ideas. Bradbury said it was the best advice he'd ever had and he followed it.

HERBERT: It's the best advice I ever had. I got it from a professional. He told me: “Don't talk your damn story, write it!” And, boy, I suddenly realized the guy was right. You're talking ’em and you’re not writing ’em. Save it for the page.

SF: Does it ever worry you that you're always thought of as Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, and that seems to rule out all the other works you've ever written?

HERBERT: No. A book has to stand on its own. Various people have various favourites. I get people coming up to me and saying: “Are you going to write any more of the Jorj X. McKie stories? Or any more Indian stories?” I get people asking if I'm going to write any more in the *Dune* series. I even have people asking me if I'm going to write any more of the *Green Brain* type of book. In fact, I don't know of any particular book I've written where I haven't had somebody come up and say: “That one was my favourite.” Fine. You can't be all things to all people. But you can try.

SF: It’s just the publicity the publishers always use—Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, as though you hadn't actually written anything else.

HERBERT: I know. And, of course, you get people coming up to you and saying: “I've read your book.” (Laughter)

SF: How much of *Dune* was preconceived?

HERBERT: The *Dune* trilogy was one book in my head. Parts of the second two were written before I'd really finished *Dune* itself. I'm not absolutely sure, but I know that the last chapter of *Dune* was not re-written. But it's ancient history in my head now and I'd have to think hard about it and go back and reconstruct it.

SF: If the trilogy was planned from the outset as one book, what led to the most recent novel, *God Emperor of Dune*?

HERBERT: Well, that's because Leto II would not get out of my head. (Laughter) I had to do that book. It was just forced on me. One day I started making notes about him and I realized I was cooked at that point. I had to do it.

SF: It is inevitable that we find ourselves talking about that one particular series and *Dune* especially. Are you often asked about the issues you deal with in your other works?

HERBERT: Not as much as I've been asked about *Dune*.

SF: What one book have you done since *Dune* that has given you personal satisfaction and excitement, covering areas not dealt with in the *Dune* cycle?

HERBERT: I think *Soul Catcher* is a book that does precisely what I set out to do. It fits all the criteria that I had set myself.

SF: Could you give us that wonderful story about the two *Soul Catchers* and the experience you had with Max Franklin?

HERBERT: Well, I wrote a book called *Soul Catcher*. It had the same title. It was about the North West Coast Indians and had similar characterization, but it wasn't the same story at all. Part of the blockage was pride. I knew I was the definitive expert on these particular Indians because of the way I had been raised with them. And I had written this book—it was completed—and I had this experience at the University of Washington “Plunge” where I was on the staff. This week I had to have the “Plunge” done to me, so that I had the same experience the students did. We bid for these little—they weren't puzzles—they were little block sets that you built toy houses out of. Like Lincoln Logs or erector sets, but they were all wood. One of them constructed an apartment house, one constructed a two-flat building, another one was a split-level suburban, and another one was a farm house. So they had all of these things there and we were supposed to bid on which ones we wanted and were supposed to put them together as a team, five or six people on a team, but not speaking. And it was billed to us as a psychological experiment, and in fact there was a person from the university psychology department to oversee each assembly effort, to make sure we didn't talk, that we did it only with gestures, and

so on. And we were told that if we built it correctly, we'd get our money back, which wasn't much—two or three dollars at the most for the most expensive one. And they stopped us short of the hour. We were supposed to have an hour to do it and they gave us fifty minutes. They then condemned everyone; we got none of our money back. So we went into the common room, feeling kind of put upon, and Max Franklin then told us that the staff had taken all the money and gone out and bought beer and candy with it and pissed it all off. (Laughter) God, were we mad! It was a trick pulled on us, you see. Then Max Franklin said: "You're angry now." She said: "This just happened to you once. It happens to Indians every day of their lives". And all I could think about at that instant was: "Ohmigod! That awful book! That hideous, terrible book!" And I went home that night and I burned every bit of it in the fireplace, every scrap of it was gone. I didn't want anybody ever to see that terrible book. Then I sat down and re-did the whole thing in three months. And it just seemed to write itself. It just came out.

SF: You had a certain anger about the Indian predicament behind you when you wrote *Soul Catcher*?

HERBERT: The first one, yes. There wasn't so much an anger as a sense that I understood the predicament. And when I wrote the second one it wasn't anger either, but I know I understood it then. I appear to have been extremely successful with the Indian culture. In fact I've had really interesting feedback. An American Indian leader, a very famous name (you'd recognize it, I'm not at liberty to use it), at a tribal conference in South Dakota, got up and slammed a copy of *Soul Catcher* down on the table and said: "Why does it have to be left to a white science fiction author to tell what it feels like to be an Indian?" He was trying to whip them up into realizing the fact that they should be writing of their own experiences. And it's true! They should be.

SF: That's quite a compliment, isn't it?

HERBERT: I felt it was a compliment. Anyway, that's how it happened and the book came out of me and it did what I wanted it to do.

SF: Briefly, could you give us a run-down on the theme of *Soul*

Catcher?

HERBERT: It is the collision between two mythologies—the North West Coast American Indian and the Greek mythology of Western culture—the Greek dominated mythology, I should say, because it isn't totally Greek. It's my understanding of this particular Indian culture and, of course, my analysis of the Greek-dominated Western culture.

SF: Going on from that idea of the American Indians feeling themselves to be outcasts from the mainstream of North American culture, do you as a science fiction writer feel in some way outcast from the normal mass of humanity?

HERBERT: No, I don't feel an outcast. But I feel like a very particular kind of observer. While you're in a story, you're out there "x" thousands of years away from today. Okay, you finish the story. Now you come back to what? Primitive times, aren't they? (Laughter)

SF: And yet you're writing about things that are really no different from today.

HERBERT: Yeah.

SF: The trappings, the furnishings are all advanced, but with things like the Butlerian Jihad in the *Dune* cycle, you've found a way to limit the setting from being too progressive, too outlandish.

HERBERT: I did it deliberately. I postulated these fixtures of the story which would frame it for my purposes.

SF: As an illustration of how things don't change all that much, you confirmed in one interview that when you were writing *Dune*, you had in your mind images of OPEC as CHOAM, the present world oil situation, and so on.

HERBERT: I was making analogues, you see. Water was money. We don't teach economics in our society, have you noticed that? We don't teach how the economic system works. Even in the best schools of economics there is a kind of a high level abstraction

ladder of remoteness. You're way up that abstraction ladder and not down there dealing with the nitty-gritty of it. How many of us, for example, realize that if you borrow money from a bank, it's the same as printing that much new money? Most people don't know it. Most people don't even think of the pressure on inflation created by plastic money, by credit cards.

SF: It would be interesting to see what would happen if all the dues owed by the countries of the world to other countries were called in —to see who would end up with all the money.

HERBERT: I had a taxi-driver in London one day and I just absolutely freaked him out. We were stopped at a stop sign and two big limousines rolled by full of Arabs. And this taxi-driver said, very bitterly: “They're buying up all of England!”. And I said: “Why do you mind? They're just bringing in wealth, making jobs, and if they get too uppity you can expropriate them.” (laughter) And he turned around and said: “I never thought of that!”.

SF: Science fiction keeps on exploring these often dangerous and provocative areas, stepping on toes…

HERBERT: Oh, yes. For example, look at the degenerative force created upon the Spanish civilization by all the gold they found in the New World—a particular kind of economic pressure! It says something about capital and how capital can be used. I happen to be a capitalist, but for a very peculiar reason. I believe that capitalism tends to break down of its own excesses, and we're forced to make adjustments at that time. The so-called “managed” societies bury their mistakes because the managerial bureaucracy is dedicated to preserving its power. And so they keep perpetuating those mistakes to the point sometimes where you can't do anything. You're lost in a morass of one mistake piled upon another.

SF: An interesting example of this self-perpetuating system is the American Drug Authority. It is now such a large employment force that in order for it to exist, it has to have corrupt agents bringing the drugs into the country for the agency to chase up.

HERBERT: Oh, indeed! Do you know what happened to the three and a half million dollars worth of heroin that was taken in the

French Connection? It disappeared from the New York City Police Property Room! I've been asked several times what would I do to solve the drug problem. Well, in the first place, I wouldn't try to solve the drug problem. But I would try to reduce the impact of it upon our society. And that could be done quite simply: take the profit out of it! Turn it over to the public health service if you must, but take the profit out of it. Make it available! Cheap! Get the government into this business and you can get your fix for fifty cents. It's been discovered quite conclusively in the U.S. that more than three-fourths of the new addicts are created by the system—addicts building a market to support their own habits. And less than a quarter of them are what you might call “joy riders”. But the damnedest lies are told about it, and, of course, there is enough profit in it right now that you can buy the sacrosanct briefcase of an incoming ambassador if you want. And I will submit to you that the ambassadorial and consular force of a certain Asian country was one of the main suppliers of heroin in the United States for a long while. It may still be. That's the way they've supported their operations in the U.S.. You can buy an Air Force general; you can buy long strings of border guards; you can buy the key police of a major city in the U.S., say, New York…

SF: So the economic strength of the system is now beginning to overwhelm and absorb those agencies designed to protect that system?

HERBERT: Yeah.

SF: At what point do you think it will reach the level of being a part of the governmental system of that particular country?

HERBERT: I think it already is. I think that they own Senators and Congressmen right now.

SF: And consequently the science fiction writer can assume a provocative stance and make comment behind his analogues, which leads us back to *Dune* for a moment and an analogy question about Salusa Secundus and the planet Dosadi. The conditions set up on Dosadi seem particularly close to the military society cum police state that Salusa Secundus must have been. Was that deliberate?

HERBERT: I used the same motivational technique in both.

SF: *The Dosadi Experiment* is a deeper, far more concentrated work in that respect than *Dune*, but there's quite a time period separating these two books, isn't there?

HERBERT: I'd have to think…

BEV: Ten or fifteen years.

SF: It was funny to watch that business session this morning where they were talking about the sites for the national conventions for the next two years. Now if that had been a Gowachin situation… (Laughter) …those putting forward the various points could have been killed for their sophistries and protocols… (Laughter)

HERBERT: Let me give a real capper. I was at the A.A.A.S. in Washington DC, and a government attorney recognized me in the elevator at the Sheraton and informed me that the American Bar Association had appointed a three-man committee to examine the Gowachin law system and make a comparison to see if… now get this… to see if an alien legal system could give us any insights into our own legal system. (Laughter)

SF: What sort of compliment is that?

HERBERT: I don't know! (Laughter) But it broke me up. Because what I did, you see, was invert our own!

SF: And in this case, it's not an alien legal system. You created it.

HERBERT: That's right. I inverted the existing Western legal system.

BEV: Or the man was talking to an alien. One or the other! (Laughter)

SF: Do you read much fiction?

HERBERT: No, I don't have time, really. I'm mostly reading non-fiction.

SF: What about movies? Do you have any particular movies or directors you admire?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I think *Walkabout*, Nick Roeg's movie made here in Australia, is one of the most flawless films that you could possibly imagine. It's beautifully visualized; true pictorial beauty. It's most marvelously cut so that you get this strange lifting rhythm in it and then a depression, and then this lifting rhythm and the depression. And you know what's going to happen, you're well aware, and yet there is nobody in there telling you. But I won't give it away. You should see it. It's a jewel. But I haven't seen too many movies lately.

SF: Have you seen the recent science fiction movies? Like *Star Wars*?

HERBERT: Oh, I saw *Star Wars*, yes. I saw the rip-offs of Gordy Dickson, Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, myself, everybody. (Laughter) This is Hollywood, you know. They practice rip-off down there. They lack imagination themselves so they dip into the imagination of others and they like to do it where they don't have to pay for it.

SF: George Lucas claims that he's using some of the best-known images from science fiction as his tribute to them.

HERBERT: It was a comic book for the screen. And there's a comparison to be made here, between what happened in science fiction in the early days of the pulps, creating the cliches of today's science fiction; preparing an audience so that you don't have to explain a lot of things.

SF: Could you tell us about *Dune* as a film?

HERBERT: The film: We have a director—David Lynch—the man who did *Eraserhead* and *The Elephant Man*. I am absolutely delighted with the choice. I don't know of a director who would be more pleasing to me. He's the very kind of a man that is needed to do this job. In addition, he's a fan. And he wants to do *Dune*?

SF: He came to the project because he wanted to do it? Not because

some Hollywood producer said: “Get David Lynch, he's free right now?”

HERBERT: It worked both ways. It was one of those marvelous meetings.

SF: What about your own position regarding the film?

HERBERT: I am in the contract as technical adviser. Now, your guess as to what that means is probably as good as mine. (Laughter) But I do have input. They listen to me. And they listen with attention. I listen to them with respect and they listen to me with respect, which is a nice way to approach this.

And I understand the difficulties of translating the written word—the page—to the screen. when you stop and think about it, the cheapest set-building in the world is in your imagination. They have to be able to build a real thing that will look real up there on the screen. You'll look at it and you'll say: Yes! That's Arrakis! That's Dune! That's a worm, that's an ornithopter, you follow what I mean? We can take these flights of fancy in our imagination. I had the question the other day: “Do you think we could have an ornithopter?”

Well, I know technically that the only things really preventing our having an ornithopter are the right kind of power source and a light, extremely strong material. If we get those two things, we're going to have an ornithopter. And there are advantages in having an ornithopter. The Harrier, for example, is a perfect example of what I mean, if you know the aircraft I'm referring to. So I don't speak from ignorance. I am a pilot, so I know the advantages of having such a craft and I know what's keeping us from having it. And this is marvelous. I just said: “Well, we invented a material that will do this and we have the power source, and here it is!” (Laughter) And we may be closer than you think because if we get into space with self-sustaining colonies, it is possible to make alloys in space that are impossible to make on Earth. I won't go into the technical details, take my word for it. If you want to look into it, the reports are there from NASA, from the L5 Society, on the advantages of doing this and what is available to us if we start smelting processes in space. So we may be very close to some

extremely new, very exciting materials.

SF: What about the design factor of the film? You obviously have a conception and that conception will not be what you see on the screen—in garments, in mannerisms, the whole thing. Do you have any quality control on that at all?

HERBERT: Yes. They want me to look at the artwork.

SF: Speaking of artwork, what about John Schoenherr's renderings for your *Dune* stories over the years?

HERBERT: My favourite! Right now I'm trying to get him involved in the project. I don't know if I'll be successful. I don't know if John's time and their time and everything else will come together. But I am making an effort to do this.

SF: He catches your mental images of Dune, the sandworms, Arrakeen, the characters…?

HERBERT: Oh, boy! Everything. It's eerie. I mean, it's eerie! It's as though he got into my head. It's neck-hair-raising, he's so much in there.

SF: Wasn't Chris Foss one of the early consultants for the movie?

HERBERT: He was, with Alejandro Jodorowsky.

SF: And H.R. Giger too, wasn't he?

HERBERT: Yeah. Giger was there. They hired him off *Heavy Metal*.

SF: Do you worry that when they actually produce the film, it will look totally different from your conception?

HERBERT: I have some worries about that. But at this point they're minor, because there really is an effort to meet that general norm. I'm sure that in your head there's a slightly different view than mine, as I'm sure there would be if we went around this room. But there is a norm in there somewhere and there really is a desire on the part of the production team to meet that norm, for economic reasons if for no others. If people believe they've seen *Dune*, they're

going to spread the word. But beyond that, let me reassert that I don't doubt at all that David Lynch really wants to do this. And he's a fan.

SF: There's the director's personal involvement in his creation as opposed to his role as a person visualizing your creation. You see no conflict between your conception of *Dune* and David Lynch's?

HERBERT: I don't see any conflict yet. There are areas where I wouldn't argue with him. I wouldn't argue, for example, with my German translator. Do you see what I'm saying? I don't speak German. I might argue with my Spanish translator, but not with my French translator, certainly.(Laughter) The point is that they're translating, and a lot of people don't recognize that.

SF: To take up this point of translations, how much of your work has actually been translated? And into how many languages?

HERBERT: Twelve languages. Right now I think almost all of my work has been translated, including the short story collections.

SF: Do you know if any of it sells behind the Iron Curtain?

BEV: There's a version of *Dune* in Serbo-Croat.

HERBERT: I don't think I could list them all, but they're in German, Japanese, Italian, French, Spanish, Israeli, Serbo-Croat, Swedish… English (Laughter)… where you had "lift" instead of "elevator". (Laughter)

SF: About Jack Vance, Poul Anderson, and yourself. You're all worldbuilders, all responsible for creating alien cultues and whole planetary societies, and you're also good friends. The name "Noah Arkwright" crops up in *God Emperor of Dune* as the author of a text referred to in passing. I believe this is a name that the three of you actually intended to use when you collaborated on a novel.

HERBERT: No, it wasn't a novel. It was a novella…

SF: When you were building the famous houseboat. Could you tell us about that?

HERBERT: Well, Jack, Poul Anderson, and I went together to build a houseboat on San Francisco Bay. And while we were there, pounding nails and cutting wood and what-not, we decided we would plot a story. And we were going to write it together because we thought it would be fun to support our houseboat habit (Laughter) with a story we wrote while we were doing the building. Then Poul got interested in something else, Jack likewise, and they shoved it off onto me and said: “Go do it!” So I did and it's called “The Primitives”. The essence of it is that the actual Stone Age artisans were women. They were the ones who shaped the spearheads and the axeheads and made the artifacts because they were home around the camp-fire while the men were out hunting. The problem of the story is that they have what is called the Mars Diamond, the biggest diamond in all of history. Only it's the most complex diamond ever discovered as far as cutting it is concerned. They're afraid to cut it. And finally it's stolen and the thieves have a captive—a man whose family has a time-machine. So they get this idea of going back in time and getting a primitive who really feels the stone and can cut it. She is brought forward in time to do this and is left alone to do it. And she makes a spearhead out of it. (Laughter) Perfectly logical.

SF: And the name 'Noah Arkwright'?

HERBERT: Then I saved 'Noah Arkwright', you see. (Laughter) And Holjance Vohnbrook. (Laughter) And Pander Oulson! Don't forget Pander Oulson! (Laughter)

SF: And, of course, Jack Vance came back at you in the *Demon Princes* books where he quotes the mythological Frerb Hankbert! And A.N. der Poulson! You in turn have a Holjance appearing as a character in *The Dosadi Experiment* and now this *Noah Arkwright*. What about Jack Vance's novel *To Live Forever*? You and Jack actually did co-plot that together?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. We plotted it together in Mexico.

SF: And really did toss a coin to see who would write it?

HERBERT: Oh yes, we really did toss a coin.

There followed further reminiscences then about that time in Mexico when the Herberts and the Vances lived together and set up their own little writing "community". Gradually, the conversation drifted back to the subject of the proposed film, Dune*, and having spoken of how he could imagine Orson Welles as Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, an 'unknown' young actor as Paul, and Sean Connery as Duke Leto Atreides, Frank Herbert made one comment which was of particular interest to Australians. He was most interested to learn that we had areas of desert on our own continent that would do Arrakis proud. What with the language and liaison problems connected with using the North African locations currently being scouted, who knows what might happen?*

Frank Herbert: Science Fiction Author
An interview with Frank Herbert: science fiction author of the Dune series, yellow journalist, and a homesteading technopeasant.

By Pat Stone

Mother Earth News
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Frank Herbert was thoughtful and opinionated.
MOTHER EARTH NEWS STAFF

By profession, Frank Herbert is a science fiction author — and quite a successful one at that. Indeed, many of his novels are regarded as classics in the field. What's more, a major film studio is well into a years-long project to convert Frank's Dune tales into a feature-length motion picture.

Of course, Herbert has written other distinguished fiction as well, but a list of his literary achievements would hardly serve to sum up this unique individual. The Washington State author staunchly maintains that any person's life should consist of much more than his or her work role (even if that role is a prominent one). He puts a lot of energy into his "nonprofessional" time. In keeping with his beliefs, Frank's a devoted father, spouse, and family man. He's also an avid alternative energy experimenter who's created his own solar collector, windplant, and methane fuel generator, all on an Olympic Peninsula homestead.

Equally important, Mr. Herbert is an outgoing social commentator who combines a strong sense of traditional values with a radical's zest for questioning (and even parodying) the basic assumptions of our culture. Staffer Pat Stone—after being sent out to Port Townsend, Washington to talk with Frank—had this to say about his encounter with the creator of the exotic, water-poor planet, Dune:

"Interviewing Frank Herbert was both a truly enjoyable and sometimes frustrating experience. The man seems charged with energy. He has an active and impish sense of humor—we did a lot of laughing—and a warm, hospitable nature that truly touched me. At the same time, though, Mr. Herbert's answers often bewildered me with their unexpectedness. He obviously relished escaping any attempts to `pigeonhole' his ideas, and even mimicked my role as interviewer by taking my picture once while I was photographing him! I tell you, at times I felt like a bit character in one of his novels who attempts—usually in vain—to keep up with the words of the book's brilliant protagonist."

Frank Herbert's ideas concerning the serious problems facing our society today and how we might successfully deal with them are often challenging and present a strong counterpoint to the views of his fellow science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov. All of us here at MOTHER EARTH

NEWS hope that you find the author/homesteader's concepts and anecdotes—as presented in the edited transcript that follows—to be as thought-provoking as we have.

PLOWBOY: Mr. Herbert, a little voice in the back of my mind keeps telling me that many readers of MOTHER EARTH NEWS' will probably wonder why our do-it-yourself, ecology-oriented magazine is interviewing a prominent science fiction writer.

HERBERT: Who, me? A science fiction writer? I've always considered myself to be a yellow journalist.

PLOWBOY: I beg your pardon?

HERBERT: Like the best muckraking yellow journalists of the news media, I ask questions that other people aren't asking, and do a lot of investigating into the world around me. So even though I try to write entertaining, future-oriented stories, my books always contain messages that—I believe—are relevant to our situation today.

PLOWBOY: So you use your futuristic fiction to comment on *contemporary* problems?

HERBERT: Yes, but don't think that's *all* I try to do when I write. People don't buy my books because they think they're going to learn something from them. The fact is, if you told somebody, "Listen, I'm going to teach you a lesson that's so important it might even change your life," that individual might say, "Oh boy, do that!" But if you then did instruct the person as you promised—and that's all you did —he or she would resent it.

So I try to give my readers real entertainment as well as my point of view. They can take either one, or both!

PLOWBOY: How did you begin your career as a "writer with a message"?

HERBERT: Oh, I knew what I wanted to do with my life even when I was quite young. In fact, on my eighth birthday I told my family, "I'm going to be a author."

PLOWBOY: They must have been tempted to take that remark as a

joke.

HERBERT: Well, I got kidded a lot as a result of my statement, but —in truth—I've never really strayed far from that goal. I was employed as a newspaper writer for many years, and I took those jobs because I saw the field as a training ground that would financially support my own writing while helping me learn to use the tools of my trade. In addition, I put in some time as a radio and television commentator. And I've done a lot of photojournalism work. I was picture editor of the San Francisco Examiner for quite a few years.

PLOWBOY: Then did you glean the "message themes" for your fiction from exposure to contemporary news events?

HERBERT: Heck, no. I developed all of my basic ideas during my childhood years on our family's farm.

PLOWBOY: You were a farm boy?

HERBERT: I milked cows—by hand—for over half of my early childhood years on a small subsistence farm in Kitsap County, Washington. And I can still clench my hands like you wouldn't believe.

PLOWBOY: You must have had other chores, too.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. There were pigs to feed, and I had corn and such to hoe. I once even reared and canned 500 chickens as a 4-H project. We raised all our own food, so—although I grew up during the Depression—I never had to worry about being hungry. In fact, I remember those "bad years" as marvelous times because I spent them in the company of a kind of large, extended family. My father had six brothers, so I never lived far from aunts and uncles, and I had cousins all over the landscape.

And I learned, from childhood, that the family experience can be very important to an individual. Family life teaches a person to shoulder his or her share of responsibility. It's also quite a supportive structure … and can stage rituals in which all of the members are able to participate. A child can develop a sense of self-

reliance and self-worth through involvement in such activities.

PLOWBOY: Did you work on your plans to be "*an author* " during those farm days?

HERBERT: Yes, I used to write awful poetry and crude childish stories. I got my best storytelling practice, though, from being the yarn-spinner for all my cousins. Whenever the whole family got together, we youngsters would go off someplace by ourselves. The other children would come up with a title—something like "The Blood and the Vow"—and I'd have to make up a tale that fit it … one that, often as not, would scare the wits out of them.

PLOWBOY: How did you develop the concepts that have become the "hidden" messages in your stories?

HERBERT: First of all, my childhood days gave me some rock-ribbed ideas about the ways people should live together. To put my beliefs simply: I think we ought to be loyal to our friends, we ought to be truthful, we ought to be supportive of family members, and we ought to provide one another with help directly instead of delegating our good deeds to institutions.

I don't like governmental "helping"—or any kind of public charity system—because I learned early on that our society's institutions often weaken people's self-reliance and damage family bonds as well. Take education, for instance. The teaching of our young ought to be about equally divided between the family, which should lay the ground-work for the child's learning, and professionals who can pass on useful knowledge that the child's relatives might not have in their repertoire. Today, though, the professional education establishment assumes that the family doesn't know what its own members need or want. The result is a classic failure: an institutionalized system that does more harm than good.

Do you know that—in response to just that problem—my own family left the United States twice? On both occasions we went to live in Mexico because I was not considered "qualified" to teach my children in the U.S., but could home-school them in Mexico. Our youngsters were taught at home when they were young, and they haven't suffered in the least from it.

PLOWBOY: So you think our country's methods of instruction have a lot to do with the destruction of many family values?

HERBERT: Absolutely. By the time you have three or four generations of people who are taught not to trust their families and their families' knowledge, individuals can really become separated from their roots. The effect is to make people feel like lost wanderers, or to cause them to think of themselves only in the role of their jobs, which is a complete misrepresentation of what it means to be alive.

Another lesson I learned in childhood is that what people do is just as important as—and maybe more so than—what they say. I had a marvelous object lesson in the difference between words and actions when I was in fourth grade. In those days I was bored to death by school, so I tended to cause a lot of trouble.

One day our teacher, a great big woman who wore eye-glasses that looked like the bottoms of pop bottles, caught me in the middle of a particularly heinous prank. She told me to stay after school and added, "I just don't know what I'm going to do with you."

Of course, I could imagine all kinds of horrible things she might do to me. Like the bastinado, or worse! But when school was over, she just made me sit and sit while she worked on papers. After what seemed like ages, she motioned me up to her desk, stared at me awhile—I could feel two holes being burned right through me—and then resumed her paperwork.

PLOWBOY: You must have been terrified.

HERBERT: Oh, I was. Finally, she put her pencil down and said, "I just don't know what I'm going to do with you." Well, it was all too much for me. I started to cry. She put her face right in front of mine then and said again!—"I just don't know what I'm going to do with you." And I said through my sobs, "Why are you mad at me?"

With that, she grabbed me by the shoulders, began shaking me roughly, and cried, "I'm not mad at you, I'm not mad at you!" Well, I now know that teachers get long lectures during their training on the importance of keeping their tempers with their students, so I

had said exactly the wrong thing to this woman. I may not have understood that at the time, but I didn't have a bit of trouble realizing that my teacher—who was repeatedly screaming, "I'm not mad at you!"—was nearly out of her mind with rage.

That incident drove home the lesson that what people say often doesn't agree with what they actually do. And that discovery played a big part in the shaping my thinking and behavior.

PLOWBOY: Do you try, in your own life, to keep a consistent thread between words and actions, then?

HERBERT: Absolutely. I already told you that family bonds are very important to me, and that we left the country to be able to teach our own children. There were also years—when our youngsters were quite small—that Bev, my wife, was the family's major income earner. She went out to the office and brought in a paycheck, while I stayed home and did the cooking, laundry, and housekeeping, took care of the children, and worked on my writing.

Our children are grown up now, but I still participate in family rituals. In fact, my niece called me last night, and I've got to change a previous appointment and go down to Eugene, Oregon because she's graduating from the university there.

I also feel strongly—and act on my feelings—that individuals should take their own steps to be more self-reliant and to lessen their impact on our environment.

PLOWBOY: What have you done to live that belief?

HERBERT: Did you see the solar collector on the side of our house? That's what's heating our home. Now I didn't say to myself that I'd wait until we could get all our heat, all the time, from solar energy, or that putting up a collector would disrupt the beautiful lines on this already constructed house, or that I wouldn't build the heater until we could come up with a way to store the warmth. I simply decided to build an inexpensive collector—the device's sun-catching "tracking rings" are made from recycled beer cans—in order to use solar heat when I can. You see, people keep looking for an absolute final solution, often waiting to use alternative technology until they

can build an energy-saving house from scratch, when there are many intermediate steps available to us.

Bev and I also grow all our own vegetables. We live in an area that has what the U.S. Department of Agriculture describes as "poverty soil." So, when we moved here eight years ago, I paid $200 to have peat hauled in by truck and dumped in the stone terraces out back. Our neighbors laughed at us for spending all that money on peat … but the vegetable crops we grew in those walled beds paid us back that investment in just a year and a half.

I also have an attached greenhouse … I'm slowly but surely thermopaning all the house's windows … I intend to add a solar collector over our swimming pool building to heat its water … and —for a time—I even raised chickens to provide manure for my methane experiments.

In addition, a friend—John Ottenheimer—and I have invented a wind machine. Our device is built on a vertical axis, a feature which allows us to transmit the power quite easily to the ground and keeps the device from being "torqued down" by sudden wind shifts. Our machine can withstand a 100-knot gust, yet can be built out of plastic, wood, or any of a variety of inexpensive materials.

PLOWBOY: Are you marketing this windplant?

HERBERT: Not yet, but we intend to. We're still testing and refining the design. We've been working on it for five years.

Another way I try to do my bit for ecology and alternate lifestyles is by bringing "movers and shakers"—men and women like the officers of Weyerhaeuser Tree Company—out here to see our place. I think it's extremely important to reach people who are making decisions that will affect the lives of us all, and to show them that you don't have to be "a kook living in a tipi"—that image is meant to describe their way of thinking, not my own—to be interested in supplying some of your own energy and food.

So I do try to express my concerns about family, social, and environmental values in my life, as well as in my writing.

PLOWBOY: I couldn't agree more that it's important to be consistent in one's actions and words. But when you talk about expressing such values in your writing, you're referring to your later work as a science fiction writer and not to your earlier, purely reportorial work, right?

HERBERT: Oh, you'd be surprised how many of my views I was able to get across in my newspaper days. I was known as a strange rebel who wrote very outspoken stuff. But people would read what I wrote, and that sold newspapers.

I'll give you an example. I was a war correspondent in Vietnam for a while. I became utterly disgusted with our military command there because it was quite obvious, to anyone in the field, that our "leaders" were lying to correspondents and to the American public.

So one of my stories documented the profound corruption, in the Thieu government, that was costing the American taxpayers millions of dollars. In one instance, the military ordered enormous lots of steel to repair our river barges. The steel just happened to turn out to be the wrong gauge for our barges, but—surprise! was exactly right for use on the boats being built at the nearby Thieu family barge factory. And gosh, before long that steel just vanished without a trace. That chain of events could never have happened unless people in our military were profiting along the way.

I got my facts on this and other instances of corruption, flew off to Copenhagen—in those days, you didn't want to be in Vietnam when you filed a story denigrating the powers that be, for fear that you might fall victim to a war zone "accident"—and sent in a complete story on this conspiracy of lies and greed. It was a "big blast" type of article and was banner headlined in every Sunday edition of the Hearst newspapers all around the country.

It so happens that Bill Hearst, Jr—who does a regular column for the Sunday editions—was also writing about the Vietnam war that day, only he presented a much rosier picture of our war effort than the one I had developed while being there. Yet Bill thought it was a great idea to run our opposing views, together, on the front page, because the resulting controversy sold lots of papers.

PLOWBOY: So you were often able to get away with such "brazen" journalism?

HERBERT: Yes, primarily because I could write well—allowing people to understand what I was saying—and I wrote sincerely, presenting my outward bias honestly and then, reporting what I saw.

PLOWBOY: How did you become interested in writing science fiction?

HERBERT: I started out doing adventure stories, and actually tried my hand at quite a number of fiction types. Still, science fiction ultimately attracted me. The genre has unlimited elbowroom, which permits me to create any kind of setting I want for whatever story I want to tell. Most important, in science fiction I can work with entertaining and dramatic stories that have analogues to the present situation. That way I can get past people's guard and really talk to the basic human beings within.

PLOWBOY: One thing I've noticed in reading and thinking about your books is that every society you describe seems to have glaring faults … no matter how noble the intentions of its creators. For instance, the most positive social system I saw in any of your works was the community described in *The Santaroga Barrier*. *[EDITOR'S NOTE: This book portrays an isolated city that does not participate in American consumerist society. Commercial corporations send an agent in to uncover Santaroga's secrets and to attempt to subvert the community.]*

At first impression, *Santaroga* appeared to be far superior to normal American society. The people were cooperative, peaceful, and happy. But by the time I reached the end of the book, I'd become aware of flaws in the community that seriously compromised its virtues.

HERBERT: I wrote *The Santaroga Barrier* with the hope that half the book's readers would end up saying, "Oh boy, what a nifty society. I'd like to live there" and the other half saying, "You wouldn't catch me dead in that place." The underlying message, then, was that one person's utopia is another person's dystopia or worst possible world

—and that any attempt to create a perfect society will fall into the trap of replenishing itself only from itself, and ignoring those differences between people that give us strength as human beings.

PLOWBOY: That's not the kind of one-sided viewpoint a reader might expect to find in the work of an author who professes to "preach" in his fiction. *Soul Catcher*, like *The Santaroga Barrier*, also seemed to be making strong negative statements about American society … only in that book the not entirely positive alternative was native American culture, a society many people think of as being—or, at least, having been—close to perfect. *[EDITOR'S NOTE: In* Soul Catcher*, a spiritually powerful Indian kidnaps the son of a prominent politician with the intention of slaying the innocent youth as part of a ceremonial revenge. One important aspect of the ritual is that the victim must agree to the slaying.]*

HERBERT: *Soul Catcher* described a collision between two mythologies, those of the native American world and of the European immigrant culture. And, in truth, this very real collision has not yet completed its shaking-down process. Indeed, the two societies still have some grave misunderstandings about each other. Many people, for instance, think that the Indians were the best ecologists this land has ever seen. I don't think that's necessarily true. Some native American cultures were actually quite hard on their environments. They were just slower—because their populations were small—at causing damage than the whites were.

PLOWBOY: Really?

HERBERT: Some tribes practiced several forms of massive kill—such as driving buffalo off of cliffs—which were sure to improve the lot of the people doing so at the expense of those who didn't. But since the rate of the environmental change resulting from such acts was too slow to be encompassed by most people's awareness of time, many men and women think that the native American societies could have lived in harmony with their environment forever if they'd just been left alone.

PLOWBOY: I must admit I've always believed that to be true. How do you perceive humanity's relationship with the environment today?

HERBERT: I look upon our involvement with the environment—and by the way, all of man's intrusions into the environment are totally natural phenomena—as a continual learning process in which there are no absolutes. Whatever we do causes changes, and we can cause gross disruption to our surroundings as a result of small-order determinations.

PLOWBOY: That statement would certainly seem to be supported by the events that occur in your *Dune* novels. *[EDITOR'S NOTE: In* Dune*,* Dune Messiah*, and* Children of Dune*, Herbert portrays generations of life and government on a harsh desert planet. The world's native people, the Fremen, are amazingly well adapted to living in a low-moisture environment. In an attempt to improve the lot of the citizens, Dune's aristocratic rulers work to increase the available water an the environment.]* The major change people tried to effect on *Dune* was to bring moisture to the desert. That clearly seemed a desirable goal.

HERBERT: Yes, *Dune* was so arid that the very idea of water coming down from the skies in rain, and of great rivers flowing over the land, conjured up visions of paradise. But when that one change was made, it had a regular "domino theory" series of consequences that hadn't been anticipated. Indeed, by the time *Dune* reached the stage described in my fourth desert planet book—*God Emperor of Dune*—the changes had pretty well eliminated individualism!.

PLOWBOY: Why? Why did you choose to portray the effects of such a seemingly desirable change as being so disastrous?

HERBERT: I felt that the historical interrelationship between the native Fremen and their desert planet had created what amounted to a religion. They had learned not to question the way to behave in their environment, but to act in certain ways on faith. They were locked into their system. So, even when the environment changed, the people didn't change their social mythology, their values, or their ways of relating to one another.

PLOWBOY: In other words, they failed to alter their own part of the planet's ecology.

HERBERT: That's right. You see, I think there are such things as

psychological ecology, religious ecology, economic ecology, etc. And none of them can exist in a vacuum. They're all interrelated. So whenever we make decisions and put them into effect, we ought to review and assess all the potential results.

The people I distrust most are those who want to improve our lives but have only one course of action in mind.

PLOWBOY: There must be a lot of folks—including many who call themselves environmentalists—who aren't in agreement with your thinking about the relation between humans and ecology.

HERBERT: Yes, there certainly are. Too many ecologically concerned individuals seem to think that simply getting rid of one noxious environmental pollutant—whether that "culprit" be nuclear power, commercial pesticides, or whatever—will solve all our problems.

PLOWBOY: I wouldn't think that most science fiction writers share your concerns, either.

HERBERT: The bulk of science fiction authors—and there are some notable exceptions to this rule—are heavily into what I call the technological toy syndrome.

Writers and scientists who believe that technology alone can solve problems have fallen into a common scientific fallacy: the belief that science can answer any question in absolute terms, that it's possible to reduce phenomena to one explanation that will operate in a vacuum. That's not the way the universe appears to me. And it quite clearly didn't appear that way to Albert Einstein or Werner Heisenberg, either.

PLOWBOY: I appreciate the fact that you don't set up one-sided simplistic solutions, but do you have any positive approaches to handling our problems? There weren't—to my knowledge— any truly promising systems, governments, or leaders described in any of your books that I've read.

HERBERT: There is definitely an implicit warning, in a lot of my work, against big government and especially against charismatic

leaders. After all, such people—well-intentioned or not—are human beings who will make human mistakes. And what happens when someone is able to make mistakes for 200 million people? The errors get pretty damned BIG!

For that reason, I think that John Kennedy was one of the most dangerous presidents this country ever had. People didn't question him. And whenever citizens are willing to give unreined power to a charismatic leader, such as Kennedy, they tend to end up creating a kind of demigod—a leader who covers up mistakes instead of admitting them—and makes matters worse instead of better. Now Richard Nixon, on the other hand, did us all a favor.

PLOWBOY: You feel that Kennedy was dangerous and Nixon was good for the country?

HERBERT: Yes, Nixon taught us one hell of a lesson, and I thank him for it. He made us distrust government leaders. We didn't mistrust Kennedy the way we did Nixon, although we probably had just as good reason to do so. But Nixon's downfall was due to the fact that he wasn't charismatic. He had to be sold just like Wheaties, and people were disappointed when they opened the box.

I think it's vital that men and women learn to mistrust all forms of powerful, centralized authority. Big government tends to create an enormous delay between the signals that come from the people and the response of the leaders. Put it this way: Suppose there were a delay time of five minutes between the moment you turned the steering wheel on your car and the time the front tires reacted. What would happen in such a case?

PLOWBOY: I guess I'd have to drive pretty slowly.

HERBERT: V-e-rrrrrrr-y slowly. Governments have the same slow-response effect. And the bigger the government, the more slowly it reacts. So to me, the best government is one that's very responsive to the needs of its people. That is, the least, loosest, and most local government.

PLOWBOY: For the past few decades, though, power seems to have been getting more and more concentrated by big business and

centralized authority. We've clearly been moving in the opposite direction from what you'd prefer.

HERBERT: I don't think that has to continue. I feel that as communication systems improve—and with the new computers that are continually being developed, communications are coming on like gangbusters—people won't be so dependent on the often one-sided reporting of the conventional media for their information. Folks will see that we can take control of some social functions now handled by big government—schools, taxation, whatever—and that the "bigger and stronger is always more effective" idea is a phony bill of goods.

So I see an evolutionary movement toward a certain kind of fragmentation, and not just because of improvements in communications.

PLOWBOY: What other factors do you think will influence this decentralization?

HERBERT: We've opened up the Pandora's box of violent technology. We're fast approaching a time when one person can make and employ instruments of violence equal to the ones formerly reserved only to massive governments.

Let's face it, our society has a tiger by the tail in technology. We can't let go. We can't all go back to the farm and be self-sufficient. There isn't enough land to do so, for one thing. Furthermore, people's expectations for their lifestyles have been raised, and you don't monkey around with human expectations. So what we need is a new way of relating to our society and its tools. And it was in an attempt to envision just such a change that, some 15 years ago, I coined the phrase "technopeasantry."

PLOWBOY: How would you define technopeasantry?

HERBERT: It involves drawing support from technology, but doing so *imaginatively*. We have to ask the question, "What elements of technology should I use and how should I use them?" A peasant knows, you see, when and why to grab a shovel or a hoe. In the same way, we have to think out our own relationship to the

complete environment, our own values and technological options, and make decisions consciously.

Too often today people don't examine or question their basic assumptions. Let me give you an example. I once taught a course at the University of Washington that was called Utopia/Dystopia. It was billed as an examination of the current state of our country and our myths of the "better life," only I had trouble getting my students to really investigate their own premises about technology and lifestyle.

So I hit on the idea of taking them out for along weekend hike in the Olympic mountains in the early spring when I knew the weather was going to be cold and rainy. All I told my class was, "We'll be out in the Olympics for two nights. It's going to rain. Bring your gear, food, and paper and pencils for taking notes. I'll meet you at the trail's head."

Now, I'm a hedonist in the wilderness. I own a good down sleeping bag and a fine one-man tent with a fly, and carry a very light pack stocked with trail food and the like. Naturally, my gear is pretty much a product of high technology.

Once we all got up to our campsite—at a place called the Flats—I set up my tent, dug a drain trench, stashed some firewood under the canopy for the morning, and helped organize the evening meal. We ate and hit the sack … and then the rain came. Well, I was quite dry and comfortable in my tent, but a lot of my students weren't so well prepared: During the night, I heard voices crying, "My sleeping bag's all wet! " or "God, it's cold! " I simply rolled over and went back to sleep.

The next morning, I got up early and built a big fire. The shivering students soon gathered round, we scrounged together something to eat, and afterward I told them to get their note pads. Then I said, "OK, the bomb just dropped and we're all that's left. How much of our former technology do we try to reconstitute?" Well let me tell you, those cold, wet people who had eaten an inadequate breakfast looked at society's technology a good bit more closely than they had when sitting in a comfortable university classroom. Students who'd been saying things like "Oh sure, I could do without all this stuff"

began to ask some basic questions, and to comprehend that technology isn't bad in and of itself. Everything depends on how we use it.

PLOWBOY: You're saying, then, that technopeasantry involves people's questioning their basic assumptions so they can make intelligent decisions about how to use technology?

HERBERT: Well, that's not all there is to it. There're other aspects to questioning how we use technology. For instance, most people today live in a "light switch" society where they have no actual connection to the tools they use. If the light goes off, they have to call the building superintendent to come repair it. Knowledge has become institutionalized into specialties, and individuals have continually less and less power over their lives.

We need to use technology differently so that people can understand their tools … and so they can be put back in touch with the natural world. In fact, one of the things our society needs desperately is a way for people to touch the earth personally and gain the restorative strength that comes with weeding or shoveling, from really getting their hands dirty. We need ways that men and women can see the direct results of their efforts.

PLOWBOY: Would it be correct to say that technopeasantry can help develop a sense of self-worth in the individual?

HERBERT: Yes, but there's more to it, yet. We have to learn to recognize that we're always going to make some mistakes, and—knowing that—we shouldn't tie our careers and self-esteem to decisions that could later prove to be the wrong ones. People must be able to say freely, "Hey, that turned out not to be such a good idea. I'd better not do that anymore."

PLOWBOY: The more you describe this concept, the more it encompasses! You're proposing that people learn to consciously judge what tools they use … to employ technologies that they control and not those that control there … and to evaluate and reevaluate all the ramifications of using each specific technology. Frankly, the thought that humans may someday be able to make so many carefully thought—out value decisions has the ring of an

idealistic dream.

HERBERT: Well, it's not going to happen overnight … unless we have a cataclysmic disaster-like some very traumatic natural phenomenon or an enormously destructive atomic war—which requires that we take such new directions in order to survive.

PLOWBOY: Assuming that we won't be forced into new behavior patterns by a catastrophe, how do you envision the change taking place?

HERBERT: As a result of social evolution. When individuals start making technopeasant choices—such as converting an inner city attic into a greenhouse—and demonstrating that doing so can be both personally rewarding and quite effective, more and more people will be drawn to such actions.

PLOWBOY: So you see the individual drive to achieve self-sufficiency as a catalyst of the movement toward what you call technopeasantry?

HERBERT: Hold on there! Yes, individuals will lead the way to a technopeasant society, but I've never said that people should strive for absolute self-reliance. I think relative freedom from dependency ought to be our goal. We all, of course, must be wary of systems—such as the whole ripcord welfare state—that systematize increasing dependence, but we must also remember a basic truth about human beings: We are interdependent. I myself am not attempting to live on a completely self-sufficient farm. I never have. Isolation is not part of my basic philosophy. The point is that we don't necessarily have to be dependent in some of the ways that we've chosen to be. I do, though, believe that a person's ties should be strongest to his or her local community, with looser bonds connecting him or her to larger communities.

In fact, there isn't a doubt in my mind that the average North American's life would improve if our society became more community based. If, say, cities like Seattle or little Port Townsend here developed symbiotic relationships with the surrounding farmland, so that—for example—the effluent of an urban community could become a tool for keeping the land around the

city fertile. Such an interlocked region would be able to establish a self-sustaining cycle and not have to waste energy trucking fertilizers and food over long distances.

PLOWBOY: And do you see increased local autonomy as an inevitable part of our future?

HERBERT: Small areas are definitely going to have to become more independent. Look at energy, for instance. There's a growing shift to alternative fuels, and there's no way in the world the OPEC nations can stop it. Now the most attractive of the new power sources that I see on the horizon is hydrogen. Hydrogen burns cleanly—the by-product of its combustion is water—and has about a six-to-one energy-to-weight advantage compared to the best conventional jet fuel. In addition, we already have the technology to make hydrogen, in a hydride form, safer to handle than gasoline.

PLOWBOY: Where would we get the energy to produce hydrogen fuel?

HERBERT: We have wind, the tides, the temperature differential in the ocean … there's an enormous amount of untapped energy. And the real importance of such diversified power resources will be the fact that communities will be able to make their own fuel.

Now you must recognize that any change which makes small areas more independent will have both good and bad aspects. After all, there is something to be said for the glue that holds us together as a society.

PLOWBOY: Wait a minute! You've spent a good bit of our time here damning big government and praising independence. Just what value do you see in large, centralized societies?

HERBERT: Remember that we are interdependent. So if you change the situation that has provided the glue of social interdependence, you must institute alternate adhesive forces to hold us together. Look at it this way: It's very possible that, within the next 15 years, a little community like Port Townsend could be in a position to threaten the federal government.

PLOWBOY: How could a small group back up such a threat? With atomics?

HERBERT: Pshaw! There are weapons much more dangerous than nuclear devices. Things like contagious diseases that can't be cured, or substances that can be slipped into food and water supply chains in order to sterilize large populations.

And the often-touted concept of world government could in no way handle such terrorism, because that particular dream suffers from what must be one of the few immovable laws of the universe: the basic truth that the more you try to control, the more there is that needs to be controlled.

PLOWBOY: So how can humanity deal with threats posed by small but powerful groups?

HERBERT: We're going to have to make very tough evaluations of how we instill morality into our young, and how we help people come to believe that all humans are similar creatures and that the world will be better off if everyone does try to live by something like the Golden Rule. And we'll probably discover—possibly only after suffering a certain amount of pain—that the only way to spread such values is, naturally, on the community and individual levels.

Ultimately, I think the individual will become increasingly important in this world. I think the collective society is on its way out. But, in relation to all my statements, you must remember that I'm talking about the kind of individual who has been raised to weigh the consequences of his or her actions, not simply for him- or herself, but for others as well. If we don't manage to produce such thinking moral citizens, we're likely going to go down the tube.

PLOWBOY: But you feel pretty sure humankind will be able to make the necessary changes?

HERBERT: I think they'll be forced on us. Oh, we'll make some mistakes. We'll probably have a number of fanatic leaders and such to deal with in the years to come. I don't see the future as being all sweetness and light, by any means. Learning from mistakes is a very

slow process. It may take us 20,000 or 25,000 years to get to where, I feel, we have to go.

PLOWBOY: Still, you think humanity will survive … and improve itself in the process.

HERBERT: Yes, and I also think that, in the far future, human beings will have scattered—in separate societies—to numerous faraway planets. Don't forget, though, when you hear me say these things, that prediction is a form of false mythology.

Why, even the idea that there's such a thing as *the* future is a bunch of semantic nonsense because there'll always be changes and new events that no one can foresee.

PLOWBOY: So I should take all your projections of what will happen to humanity with a few grains of salt.

HERBERT: Of course.

PLOWBOY: You know, Mr. Herbert, it figures that you'd give me a prediction and then tell me not to believe it. Throughout this interview it's been all but impossible to pin you down to "neatly packaged" ideas. In fact, your concept of technopeasantry seems, in essence, to call for people to adopt a questioning state of mind that deliberately avoids set solutions. I can imagine that many men and women who read your books or hear your ideas would prefer to be given a clear and uncomplicated plan they could respond to.

HERBERT: Very likely, Monsieur Stone. But I don't believe in simple answers.

A Few Frank Herbertisms

The highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences.
Dune

If you say, "I don't want that to happen," and all the while you are making it happen, which thing are we to believe? Do we believe the words or do we believe the body?

Soul Catcher

The one-eyed view of our universe says you must not look far afield for problems. Such problems may never arrive. Instead, tend to the wolf within your fences. The packs ranging outside may not even exist.
Children of Dune

… you know the story of Eve and the apple. Here's an interesting fact about that story: Eve was not the first to pluck and sample the apple. Adam was first and he learned by this to put the blame on Eve. My story tells you something about how our societies find a structural necessity for sub-groups.
God Emperor of Dune

"For what do you hunger, Lord?" Moneo ventured.
"For a humankind which can make truly long-term decisions. Do you know the key to that ability, Moneo?"
"You have said it many times, Lord. It is the ability to change your mind."
"Change, yes. And do you know what I mean by longterm?"
"For you, it must be measured in millennia, Lord:"
"Moneo, even my thousands of years are but a puny blip against Infinity …. In the view of Infinity, any defined longterm is short-term."
"Then are there no rules at all, Lord?" Moneo's voice conveyed a faint hint of hysteria.
Leto smiled to ease the man's tensions. "Perhaps one.
Short-term decisions tend to fail in the long-term."
God Emperor of Dune

Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

Beverly and Frank Herbert at home, Port Townsend, September 11, 1979

Photographer: Webber, Phil H.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

In this image Tacoma-born author Frank Herbert (1920-1986) and his wife Beverly sit in the living room of their home. Mounted on the wall between the paintings (original works by John Schoenherr for a "Dune" calendar) is a control panel for the home's solar heating system. An avid alternative energy experimenter, Herbert created his own solar collector, wind plant, and methane fuel generator at his Port Townsend home. Herbert was the first science fiction author to popularize ideas about ecology and systems thinking, stressing the need for humans to think both systematically and long term. The same year this image was taken Jimmy Carter became the first president to install solar-energy panels at the White House.

Liner Notes from *Frank Herbert Reads his God Emperor of Dune*

By Ben Bova

the Hugo and Nebula award-winning DUNE series...
read by the best-selling author Frank Herbert...
over 15 million copies in print
FRANK HERBERT READS HIS
GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE
(EXCERPTS)
caedmon
TC 1694
Cover art by John Schoenherr

All truly great art shares this characteristic: the more you study it, the more it reveals.

In the fourth volume of his massive Dune saga, GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE, Frank Herbert reveals the underlying theme of this millennia-spanning supernovel. He is dealing with nothing less than the ultimate issues confronting every generation of humankind: How do our minds work? How do our societies work? Why do we need messiahs? What is our relationship to the world in which we live, how should we interact without environment—the social environment as well as the physical?

As shown in the excerpts from the novel read here by the author, Herbert is using the Dune Saga to examine the twinned ultimates of human existence, creation and death. These are the two sides of the universal coin, the tragedy and triumph of all messiahs, the external forces of light and darkness that can only exist together. You cannot

have one without the other.

GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE leaps three thousand years from the ending of the previous Dune volume, to take up the story of Leto II, son of Paul Atreides, heir to Muad'Dib's vision of the Golden Path. Leto is metamorphosing into something beyond human form. Internally, he contains all the memories of all his ancestors. Externally, his human body is merging with the gigantic bulk of a sandworm. Leto is the symbol of a universal truth, as applicable to human institutions as it is to the vibrations of atoms and the swirlings of galaxies: nothing stays the same, nothing is ever eternally certain.

This is the wisdom of science, and Herbert knows it well. It is the lesson that Galileo and Newton and Einstein offer us. Those who seek an unchanging, eternal stability are fools. Those who claim to have absolute truth are either liars or self-deceived. We are on a constant voyage of discovery, even those of us who keep their eyes tightly shut and refuse to allow new visions to alter their doggedly fixed preconceptions.

The wise human being looks to the future, just as Leto moves, step by careful step, along the Golden Path. Only the absolutist stares fixedly into the past. Only the cynic claims that it makes no difference, since tomorrow and yesterday are all alike

All these themes, these points of philosophy, these threads of knowledge, are woven together in GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE with the art of the master storyteller. In accomplishing this, Herbert has created the ultimate science fiction work, a many-volumed supernovel that transcends the usual literary limitations of space and time to tell a story that could be told in no other way except as science fiction.

For what Frank Herbert, the novelist, knows is that we readers will never accept the truths of the universe simply because they are told to us as moral precepts, or we read them as scientific facts. Learning and believing are two different things. Hearing and understanding are different also. We can read the rulebooks, copy down the ancient wisdoms, study the texts of science. But to believe, to understand, we must accept such knowledge at the emotional,

imperative level of our souls. We must feel it in our guts as well as store it in our brains. That is why the storyteller works so hard to capture our emotions. Otherwise, the Bible and the Koran would be little more than books of lists.

Herbert as novelist is doing to his readers exactly what Leto is doing to his subjects: educating them, helping them to learn more about themselves so that they can understand more, and better. Opening their eyes to the real world. For there is a Golden Path ahead of us. Frank Herbert firmly believes that, and he wants you to believe it, too.

Creation and destruction. Life and death. You cannot change the arid planet Dune into a green, blossoming world without destroying the physical environment of the desert and the society of the fremen. You cannot create anything unless you are willing to destroy. A messiah cannot establish the new world he seeks without destroying the old world—and himself.

"Laws tend to be temporary over the long haul, Moneo," says the God Emperor of Dune. "There is no such thing as rule-governed creativity."

Change. The inevitability of change. The constant yin-and-yang cycle of creation and destruction. Leto seeks to prepare the human race for the ability to act wisely over the long haul, to be able to plan and act over spans of centuries, millennia, eons. Frank Herbert is telling us that we must acquire the wisdom to look deeply into the future, and the courage to act upon what we see. We must be ready to create new ideas, new forms, new ways of life. And we must be prepared to accept the destruction of the old that accompanies all creation.

This is Leto's message. This is Frank Herbert's message. In our world today, armed with nuclear weapons and already dangerously polluting its environment, we must look to the future for our salvation, never flinching from what we see there, and then plan and act accordingly.

Here on this record, key excerpts from GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE illuminate Herbert's message. Leto speaks to Moneo and Duncan

Idaho and others, but it is always Frank Herbert speaking to us. Like all fiction, this supernovel tells us things we need to know about our own lives.

The more you study it, the more will be revealed to you.

BEN BOVA

Ban Bova is vice-president and editorial director of *Omni Magazine*. He has authored more than a score of books, the most recent of which is *The High Road*, a non-fiction work about man's venture into space.

Although **Frank Herbert** is best known for his epic science fiction trilogy—*Dune, Dune Messiah,* and *Children of Dune*—he has about twenty novels to his credit.

His first book, *Dragon in the Sea,* (International Fantasy Award co-winner), is still in print and has just been reissued by Ballantine under its original title, *Under Pressure.*

Children of Dune, published by Putnam's in 1976, is on the best-seller lists all over the country.

Dune, winner of the World Science Fiction Convention Hugo award and the Science Fiction writers of America Nebula award, is being made into a major motion picture.

The Dosadi Experiment, his latest, has received extraordinary critical acclaim.

Mr. Herbert worked as a professional newspaperman for over 20 years on the west coast. Ten of these years were with the *San Francisco Examiner.*

He lives with his family in Port Townsend, Washington—on the northeast corner of the northwest corner of the state, about 30 air miles from Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

One of his major interests is turning his six wooded acres into an Ecological Demonstration Project, with the object of showing how a high quality of life can be maintained with a minimum drain on the planet's total energy system.

Mr. Herbert has also recorded DUNE: THE BANQUET SCENE (TC 1555), SANDWORMS OF DUNE (TC 1565), BATTLES OF DUNE (TC 1601) and THE TRUTHS OF DUNE (TC 1616) for Caedmon.

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Content Cut From The Dune Encyclopedia: Alien Life: The Argument from Science

By Walter E. Meyers
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While not bearing directly on the question of the existence of God, the likelihood of the presence of intelligent life can be determined by arguments thousands of years old. These arguments have been sharpened by the exploration of thousands of worlds, strengthening some, disproving others. They lead, as we shall see, to one of the most baffling questions mankind has ever faced.

Through all of this essay, we shall be discussing intelligent life of the kind represented by humanity. We shall not concern our-selves with speculation on what other kinds of intelligence may be possible, but rather limit ourselves to the kind we know most about--ourselves. And the first area we shall consider is that of the stars and their planetary systems which are hospitable to life.

The best theoretical considerations, supported by primary investigation, demonstrate that something over 90% of stars have planetary systems of one kind or another. For our galaxy that would give about 280 billion planetary systems. Of this vast number, about a quarter circle stars between spectral classes F2 and M2--that is, stars that range between 1-1/2 times the mass of Sol or Wake to 1/2 half their mass. Above the top of this range, the lifetime of the star is too short to allow intelligent life to evolve, while below the bottom end, the tidal effects of the star on her planets make the evolution of life unlikely. Eliminating those stars larger or smaller than this range leaves 70 billion planetary systems circling stars with the right mass, luminosity, and lifespan for the evolution of intelligent life.

Many of those stars, however, are binary or multiple systems: somewhere around 65% of them. The existence of such systems

does not necessarily rule out conditions for the maintenance of life, except in those binaries where one member is a giant. Such systems are unsuitable because the giant would explode as a supernova long before intelligent life could evolve. But in many other cases, one of the stars in the binary system possesses planets, one of which falls within the ecosphere that supports life: Ecaz, fourth planet of Alpha Centauri Beta, is an example of such. Moreover, in some binary systems, both stars have planetary systems and suitable ecospheres: thus, Yorba, the third planet of Cygni Alpha, is hardly affected by the existence of its mother star's companion, while Diana, second planet of Cygni Beta, is similarly unharmed by the existence of Cygni Alpha. Subtracting those stars without suitable conditions because of their membership in a multiple system, we are left with about fifty billion appropriate stars or star systems with ecospheres that will support life of our kind.

Of course, there may be no suitable planet within the ecosphere of the star, or the chemical composition of the star may be wrong. Those stars, principally toward the center of the galaxy, that are called Population II stars, were formed almost entirely from hydrogen and helium, and hence their planetary systems must also be composed of those elements. Any planets they possess would be gas giants. They would lack the carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and so on necessary for the life familiar to us. Moreover, the enormous amount of radiation at galactic centers is inimical to life.

Of the Population I stars, on the outskirts of the galaxy, many would have been enriched by heavy elements in the gas clouds formed by the exploding giants of the region. Stars formed from these clouds, so-called "second generation" Population I stars--and only these--would have planetary systems whose chemical composition includes those elements needed for life. About 10% of our former total are second generation Population I stars, or 5 billion.

Second, consider the ecosphere itself; "ecosphere" is the term used for the range of distance from the star within which life of our kind is possible: closer to the star, conditions are too hot; farther from it, conditions are too cold. Thus, the star must not only have a suitable ecosphere, but the planets in its system must move in almost

circular, widely separated orbits, and most important, one of the planets must be within the ecosphere. Now, how "deep" is the ecosphere? Theories here have never been exact, ranging from 100 million kilometers thick (large enough for two or three planets) to 10 million kilometers (barely enough for one). Exploration has disclosed ecospheres of varying depth, but in general only about half of the planetary systems under discussion here include a planet which falls within the ecosphere. Systems such as that of Lalande, in which two planets (Carillon, the second, and Libermann, the third) fall within the ecosphere are very rare. Therefore our total is further reduced: stars with planets within a suitable ecosphere in our galaxy number about 2 and a half billion.

Third, consider the composition of those suitable planets. The planet must have enough mass to possess a gravity sufficient to hold a suitable atmosphere. Using the mass of Giedi Prime as the norm, planets with less than .4 of its mass will be unable to retain a dense enough atmosphere for free surface liquid to exist. Just about 40% of the planets within suitable ecospheres are in the right range of mass, and have surface water--about 1 billion planets.

Yet conditions hostile to the evolution of intelligent life may still occur. Planets with eccentric orbits will produce extreme variation in surface conditions, as may planets with slow rotations. Planets on the massive side of the range may collect so much water that the ocean covers, or nearly covers, their surfaces (Gamont is such a world; it is unlikely that intelligent life could have evolved on its scattered archipelagos); smaller planets may collect too little water, turning the planet into a desert (Arrakis is no counterexample here, since the desert conditions there were not those prevailing in the relatively recent geological past). Other things may be wrong: too high a degree of vulcanism, or too intense a meteoric bombardment (both conditions have been advanced as the cause of the disappearance of Harmonthep in historical times). Planets not subject to any of these disqualifications, ones like Caladan, Finally, Refuge, Topaz, Wallach, or the many other human-inhabited worlds, represent about one-half the total number: hence, we are led to the figure of about 500 million habitable worlds.

To measure the likelihood of life arising on one of these planets, we

must now turn to chemistry and biology. In the thousands of years that mankind has studied this problem, hundred of theories have been advanced about how, when, or whether chemical reactions would produce complex proteins and nucleic acids in the combinations needed for life. These theories of the occurrence of life have swung from "impossible" to "inevitable" and back again with frustrating regularity. In the worst possible case--that the generation of life depends on complexities with a vanishingly small chance of happening, I would not have written this essay, nor you be reading it. Our intention here is to examine the best possible case: that in the conditions suitable for the preservation of life, life will arise, indeed must arise, after an elapsed time of about one billion years. That span of time comprises 8% of the lifetime of a habitable planet; hence, of the total of such planets, about 40,000,000 (8%) have had insufficient time for life to arise. But that means that 92% have had enough time: 460 million planets should be life-bearing.

But what kind of life? Using the fossil records of those planets which have been explored, we find that multi-cellular organisms take, on the average, four billion years to evolve. Therefore one-third of habitable planets bearing life have nothing more complex than unicellular organisms. Subtracting these, we are left with something like 307 million planets with higher forms of life. What percentage of these, then, should have intelligent life? Explorers have often approached a world that seemed to have all the right features, even one with sea life of complexity, yet the land masses were sterile--devoid of life (one such is Vereitelung). It appears that 36% of a planet's lifetime is necessary for the conquest of the land--an environment sufficiently protective allow the existence of life and sufficiently challenging to give an advantage to intelligence. By this measure, 294 million worlds have had enough time for intelligent life to arise. Ten thousand years should certainly suffice for the development of space flight, and if human civilization is taken as the measure of the progress of all civilizations (given a planetary lifespan of some 12 billion years), then the civilizations of almost all of these inhabited worlds should be more advanced than we are. By the arguments here advanced (none of which are novel), we are led to the conclusion that there should be an enormous number of intelligent species in the universe, each of which has

evolved independently. Even if these arguments are mistaken by a factor of 100, there should still be 2,800,000 civilizations in our galaxy more advanced than we are. Thus we confront the question which twenty thousand years of human thought has failed to answer:

Where are they?

NOTE

It is useless to argue that intelligence may necessarily imply a violence that so intense that it inherently limits the development of civilizations. If this were the case--if civilizations inevitably destroyed themselves after a shorter or longer time, we should have found some trace by now of those destroyed societies. None has been found. (See THE CROMPTON RUINS.)

Starlog Magazine

by Chris Henderson,
STARLOG MAGAZINE #66, 1983

Editor's Note: Frank Herbert is one of the most widely read and important authors of science fiction. His Dune *books are perhaps his most significant contribution, along with his steadfast refusal to back away from serious and controversial subject matter.* Starlog *caught up with the busy writer last September while he was in New York promoting his new novel,* The White Plague.

STARLOG: In total, how many attempts have there been to bring *Dune* to the screen?

HERBERT: Oh, wow…

STARLOG: Let's limit it to "major" attempts.

HERBERT: Two. Arthur P. Jacobs [producer of the *Planet of the Apes* series] was first. He had the bad taste to die without consulting me.

STARLOG: How far did his project go?

HERBERT: To a storyboard, not to a script. Then, there was Alejandro Jodorowsky [writer/director of *El Topo*], with a script and a storyboard which I am sure couldn't have been done in less than 10 hours.

STARLOG: You worked with Salvador Dali on that version.

HERBERT: Right. And Jodorowsky fired Dali because Salvador had the temerity to speak his own mind. Disagree or agree with the man, it was no reason to dump him as an artist. Alejandro's problem was that he had so many personal, emotional axes to grind—I used to kid him: "Well, I know what your problem is, Alejandro. There is no way to horsewhip the pope in this story."

Now, the newest attempt is by David Lynch [director of *Eraserhead*,

The Elephant Man]. They have a beautiful script. Believe me, it is good, about two hours, 10 minutes long, maybe. If they can translate that into cinematic form—and I don't see any reason they couldn't—you will see *Dune* on the screen.

The beautiful thing is the technique that David used to imply things; he doesn't go through delineating everything—he hits high points where details you might like to see, in the 10 hour Jodorowsky version were only implied. You don't need any more. You just go on with the story thread of this movie.

STARLOG: How have you been involved in these three separate projects?

HERBERT: There was no involvement at all with Arthur Jacobs; none. I was asked to comment on Jodorowsky's storyboard and script, but before I could, that one just died in the water, and was never made. Then, Dino de Laurentiis came along and bought the original contract but did not have enough time to do a movie, so he had to come to me to renegotiate. And in that renegotiation, I specifically became a technical advisor on the film. They must bring me on the set whenever they get to principal photography. This doesn't mean that I have any absolute vote on what happens. And I really don't want that kind of vote because I'm not an expert moviemaker.

This is a translation job. I wouldn't pretend to be the person who should translate *Dune* from English into French. My French is execrable. It's the same with a movie; you go to the person who speaks “movie.” We found someone who really can; that's David. On the other hand, David listens to me. I had a lot of input, giving him the sense of the story, what I was doing and helping him to abbreviate it.

STARLOG: What do you think of David's work.

HERBERT: I'm an admirer; I like what he has done. I can see from his script that he has *Dune* in mind. David has said that he wants to make a film so that when people walk out of the theater, they will know they've seen *Dune*, and I think he can do it.

This won't be a comic book for the screen, but a story about people. These are people of a different kind in a different environment, which is, after all, the essence of science fiction. You couldn't shoot *Hurricane* in New York. It wouldn't translate, would it? The secret of science fiction is that it enables you to create different kinds of drama in ways that aren't available to you in any other medium.

That's what science fiction has going for it. Real serious science fiction dominating the screen, the same way it dominates the genre in print.

STARLOG: Do you see much hope for that happening?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. What we're into right now is the comic book and pulp magazine era of science-fiction movies. We are creating an audience, putting out the cliches that every science fiction fan knows, but that most of this new audience does not know. This was *Star Wars*' chief value. I could see the comic book attraction for a lot of the audience, but it brought in many more people who didn't know the first damn thing about science fiction. They liked that kind of black and white exposition, and so, they liked the film.

STARLOG: The timing was right for *Star Wars*. After nearly 15 years of downbeat, anti-hero films, here's a new “Errol Flynn” movie, which takes its subject seriously—and captures an audience.

HERBERT: You're absolutely right, despite the fact that *Star Wars* reached into existing science fiction and ripped-off everything in sight.

STARLOG: Aren't those same elements—previously used by Larry Niven, Doc Smith, Fred Pohl—just the conventions of science fiction?

HERBERT: Not just the conventions, but the cliches of science fiction. They aren't cliches to us on the inside, merely the devices used to tell an acceptable science fiction story.

Someone once asked me if I objected to finding “plasteel” in other science-fiction stories, and I said, “No.” “But you originated it!” And l said, “So?” Big deal, I originated it. So what? Now, it's a part of

the genre, part of the business. You don't worry about things like that. And for making science fiction so identifiable, I think that *Star Wars* did us all a big favor.

STARLOG: Four hundred fifty million dollars in the box office does bring one an air of respectability.

HERBERT: Oh, yes.

STARLOG: Soon to be followed by a slew of imitators.

HERBERT: As everyone tries to do another one.

STARLOG: *Outland*—"*High Noon* in space"—or *Alien*.

HERBERT: "The Black Gang in space." Anyone who knows the first thing about what human beings will have to do in space travel, knows that you can not translate the tramp steamer into space. The most unimportant person in that crew is absolutely as important as the captain, for that ship's survival. If anyone goofs up, they're all going to die. It's a new social glue that space travel will impose on humankind.

Go to the best, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It managed to give you a sense that things familiar to us now, had been moved just one step out, into that area where there is no air.

STARLOG: *2001* premiered at a time when no one took science-fiction films seriously. Most of the picture's appeal came from that approach.

HERBERT: A good point. They did take it seriously, and that's the only way science-fiction films will survive. We must start getting more of the same. I also know I'm right in saying that we're now in the pulp era of science-fiction movies.

STARLOG: Hasn't the mainstream media almost always been 30 years behind the genre?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. We haven't graduated yet to this genre's fine literary or dramatic capabilities. Look at *Battlestar Galactica*, just "*Wagon Train* in space."

STARLOG: That premise might have worked: I think David Gerrold diagnosed the problem correctly when he said *Galactica's* central theme was about running away.

HERBERT: It would have been better if the survivors had a tangible goal and not have said, “Well, we've lost what we had. Let's get out and hope no one follows us.” Most people disagree with that idea; they said, “That isn't the way how we do it! I'd turn around and kill the bastards.”

STARLOG: Do you foresee any similar problems with the new *Dune* script?

HERBERT: Oh, no. Of course, the film has yet to be cast and I haven't seen any shooting or rushes yet. They're getting ready to start down to Mexico soon. The peso is very attractive now. The scenery there is very appropriate for this film. The Sonora Desert is one place that I went to sit in and live in, so I could get the feeling of being in a desert before I wrote *Dune*.

[The production did, in fact, move down to Mexico the first week of October. Ed.]

STARLOG: It sounds as if David Lynch is doing an exceptional job with this project.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. There were a few things I felt that shouldn't have been left out of the script. After I mentioned them, they put them back in.

STARLOG: The film's major concentration won't be on the book's violence and sandworms?

HERBERT: The feel will be for the politics and the people. David has a way—as in *The Elephant Man*—of giving you the feel of a situation, the attitudes of a people and an environment, without going into a lot of detail. That's something Ridley Scott is also good at. He was on the scene for a time. Ridley is a good director, but he wanted to do an incest story about Paul and his mother. It might have been interesting, but it wouldn't have been *Dune*. I warned him, “Look, they tell me there are 40 million people worldwide who

have read *Dune*. If you alienate that audience, you're going to have a turkey." I mean, look at *The Lord of the Rings*…

STARLOG: Once was enough.

HERBERT: You get my point exactly. They missed the point. Poor animation, poor story. That film just wasn't what it was supposed to be.

STARLOG: And David Lynch hasn't missed your point, he has found the essence of *Dune*!

HERBERT: Yes.

STARLOG: So, what is the essence of *Dune* to Frank Herbert?

HERBERT: It is a story of political, economic, and social commentary which is carried along with a particular kind of drama, the drama of the Messiah. It originated as a study of the Messianic impulse in humankind—why do we follow the leader?

STARLOG: Fortunately, it appears that *Dune* will be faithfully translated to the screen. What about science fiction in general? Can we hope for more quality productions in film and on television?

HERBERT: Oh, sure. There's hope. We're now fighting the investor sources. They're always looking for a sure thing, something that someone else gambled with and won. So, they say, "Give me one of those."

At the corporate level, where these decisions are made, there's always a scapegoat. If things go bad, the people who made the decision stay, the scapegoat goes. This is hellishly hard on assistant vice-presidents and on the genre. However, along comes someone who recognizes the peculiar value of science fiction in telling a story—as it happened in the pulps—and you'll begin to get quality. After a while, the slow accumulation of successes points the way, and although you will never completely get rid of the fringe of bad films and television shows, there's a slow but constant upgrading.

STARLOG: What would you consider the successes thus far?

HERBERT: Oh God, don't put me on the spot—well, OK, *The Day of the Triffids* as a superb film. *Star Trek*, of course, helped, because it created, outside the core of Trekkies, an audience which said, "Oh, that's what you mean by science fiction." That series told many stories that were peculiar to science fiction. The John Campbell story, "Who Goes There?," filmed as *The Thing*, was another good one.

I think *A Clockwork Orange* was a land-mark in the field. It marked a point where we could say, "We've done that; now, we can go do something better." That was a seminal point. Others were *Forbidden Planet*, *When Worlds Collide*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, even *Close Encounters*…

STARLOG: No other television series?

HERBERT: I don't find myself reaching back for other important science fiction which was made strictly for television. Maybe I missed something, because I don' t watch a lot of television or have a TV. And then, maybe there wasn't much there.

STARLOG: One of your major objections to televised science fiction is its dependence on props. You've written very little "prop" science fiction. Now, your latest novel, *The White Plague*, is being hailed as a mainstream novel, and not science fiction. It is a science-fiction story, but mostly a story about people and what they do to each other. How are sales?

HERBERT: The first figures show that it's doing the "hot cake" thing. They started the first two weeks out with 3,500 copies each week. Every week since then has seen 2,000 more shipped out. So far, it's holding, and they expect that to continue.

The first feedback I've gotten is that many people have been buying it to find out about "this science fiction thing." They've leafed into the book and said, "Well, this isn't space opera; I think I'll read it!" Fine. That's what I hoped to do. I hoped to acquaint more people with the fact that when you say something is science fiction, it doesn't mean that it has to be space opera or a shoot-'em-up transported off the planet. It can deal with serious, contemporary subjects in analogous or predictive fashion, which is exactly what

I'm doing here.

Tell me… when you were reading *The White Plague*, did you identify strongly with any one character, and keep identifying with that character throughout the book?

STARLOG: O'Neill. Pretty much so. There are two predictable things you can do when the end comes: predict that he will do what he does do or that he'll do a reversal. Either is possible, it depends on the way you think. I followed along with what O'Neill did because, right or wrong, he was standing up for himself and saying, "That's it, I'm not taking anymore. Now I fight back." I was ultimately disappointed in him, but it was still a great book.

HERBERT: That's interesting. It's about one-half of the reaction I've been getting. The other half is people who have put themselves into the story, as themselves, saying, "Well, the world has changed this way. What the hell would I do?"

STARLOG: The book's realism almost forces you do that. You think, "Yeah, people would be stupid enough to do that." It's almost impossible not to say that several times while reading it.

HERBERT: No, you can't. It's hard for a writer, as you well know, to do a new kind of book—which this is—and find out if you've gotten across what it is that you wanted to get across. It's very pleasant to find that I did because I worked very hard to create that effect. You understand the madman, even though you are repelled by what he does.

STARLOG: Why did you choose Ireland for the book's setting?

HERBERT: I picked it because I know Ireland well. It was suitable given the story I wanted to tell.

STARLOG: Were you trying to wake anybody up?

HERBERT: Of course.

STARLOG: Do you think you will?

HERBERT: Let's wait and see. I may have a monumental flop or I

may have an *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Who knows?

STARLOG: Has the book been banned in Dublin?

HERBERT: No, and I don't expect it to be. I've had a very interesting reaction. The Irish who have been born and bred in Ireland have said, “Yes. You nailed it—you nailed Ireland.” The second and third generation Irish-Americans are the ones who are offended by my depiction of the country.

STARLOG: Thanks to the publication of *The White Plague*, there have been allegations that Frank Herbert “hates” the Irish.

HERBERT: And of course, I don't. I don't hate the Irish. As a people, I think the Irish are caught in a psychological bind and in a para-military bind, because of generations of stupidity originating in Great Britain. And, as usual, stupidity engenders stupidity.

STARLOG: True enough. You've explained the essence of *Dune*, according to Herbert; what is the point of *The White Plague*!

HERBERT: Its first purpose is to entertain. Second, it's true, I do put a lot of message in with a mess of pottage; I do it every time. The message here is that you had better not concentrate all of your attention on the dangers of atomic energy, because Pandora's Box is open, and many things are coming out of it which are cheaper and much more deadly.

The other side of that coin is not the research or the development of these things, it's how they are used. I'm not against scientific research, I don't want a lid clamped on it—I just want people to start paying attention.

Futuristic Meditations from Dune's Frank Herbert

by Jean Marie Stine,
L.A. Reader, 1984

This never-before reprinted conversation was originally published in an issue of the L. A. Reader *in mid-1984 (at the time of the movie release). During our post-interview conversation Frank, who was on his way to climb the Himalayas with Sherpa guides, mentioned that he had just written the outline for what would be the final* Dune *book and he and an attorney had put a copy in a safe deposit box until he returned just in case anything happened to him. On his way to the Himalayas, Frank was diagnosed with a fast moving cancer, and passed away a few months later. Twenty years on, I discovered that no one in the Herbert family had known of the outline, and that its existence had only recently been discovered.*

> A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct. This every sister of the Bene Gesserit knows. To begin your study of the life of Muad'Dib, then take care that you first place him in his time: born in the 57th year of the Padishah Emperor, Shaddam IV. And take the most special care that you locate Muad'Dib in his place: the planet Arrakis… Arrakis, the Planet known as Dune, is forever his place.

In 1965, after being turned down by 22 different publishers despite its enthusiastically received serialization in Analog, Frank Herbert's Dune *was published in a tiny edition, of 2,000 copies by a small house known principally for auto-repair manuals. Later that year, the paperback rights were picked by a publisher of genre fiction, notorious for never paying royalties. Herbert's earnings from both editions of his monumental vision (700-plus pages) totaled a modest $2,500.*

Nearly 20 years later, Dune *and its successors have become massive-selling cult classics, their success aided by a terrific series of plugs in the* Whole Earth Catalog *and avid proselytizing by hardcore fans. The*

fourth book, bearing the unlikely title God Emperor of Dune, *seemed to be permanently ensconced on the New York Times bestseller list, and the fifth,* Heritage of Dune*, has also made the list. And David Lynch's filmed version of* Dune *was reportedly one of the most expensive movies ever made (for its era).*

The Dune *cycle blends traditional science-fiction elements—supermen, galactic intrigue, alien ecology, panoramic battles between good and evil, etcetera]—with what the* Science Fiction Encyclopedia *terms "complex intellectual discourse and genuinely developed concepts." A common theme in his work is an extrapolation of evolution, and how natural selection creates humanoids able to thrive in the most extreme environments.*

Herbert grew up and was educated in Washington state and spent two decades as a reporter and photographer for newspapers in the Northwest before becoming a full-time novelist. (He was one of the first photojournalists to use a 35mm camera.) Since then, he has been peripatetic to an extreme, living on and traveling to countless islands and at least five continents. He next plans to explore the terrain surrounding Mt. Everest, with several Sherpa pals, and to document the East/West culture clash in that altitudinous zone.

But when this interview was conducted, he was comfortably settled in an airy condo on Manhattan Beach's boardwalk. State-of-the-art stereo equipment dominated the absolutely uncluttered living room. There are no books in sight. Herbert, clean-shaven, looked like a handsomer Jack Albertson, and was much thinner than the dust-jacket portrait would lead you to believe. Before and after the interview, he chatted fluently on subjects ranging from the latest camera gear to the intricacies of piloting small aircraft, and seemed genuinely pleased to be interviewed.

JMS: *Dune* is your most celebrated, successful and in many ways most personal book. Certainly you must have approached the movie version with a very critical eye. What did you think of it?

HERBERT: Some people who haven't read the book are a bit confused. About 20 percent of these are put off. The others are saying, "I missed something. I'm going to go back and see it again or read the book." But I don't want to be in a position of just flogging the book. It's a great movie. Really, David has done a

damned fine job. Pictorially and texturally it's beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze frame shots and say, “I want that one on my wall, and that one, and that one.” David's a painter; he had Tony Masters there as production designer, for God's sake. And his choice of visual metaphors is really superb. The idea of rococo Renaissance background art… well, I recreated a medieval feudal society. So what does Renaissance art say to Western viewers? It says feudatory, right? You don't even need to mention it. It took me many pages to create the effect on paper he creates in two seconds with a shot.

The only way this movie could have been made was if they spent megabucks on it. And to be pragmatic about it, that meant they had to do a production they could show in theaters everywhere, and that meant that they had to cut it. Luckily, we have about five hours of film. In fact, we have as much film on the cutting room floor as we have on the screen. All the scenes that everybody misses from the book are all there. So we are now discussing doing a special mini-series for T.V. about three or four years down the pike essentially the uncut version of the film.

JMS: The first *Dune* book (the one the movie was based on) taken by itself seems pretty straightforward good guys vs. bad guys stuff, with the good guys triumphing at the end. But in the second book you question a number of assumptions you led the reader to make in the first book and you reveal a much more complex and meaningful design than was apparent in the first book alone.

HERBERT: The first three books were one book in my head. I wrote parts of the second two before I completed the first. In fact I wrote the last chapter of the first one before I finished it. I did develop the other two a bit more because I thought of new stuff. But when I finished that third book I thought I was through with it. I had a theory. Charismatic leaders—not necessarily Messiahs, but Messiahs included—tend to create explosive upheavals in human societies which are very dangerous to individuals and to the societies themselves, because they create power structures. So you get these centers of power and it doesn't matter a damned bit how pure and good the hero is. By just being he creates a power structure and so it's like a magnet: the iron filings, the corruptible, come in and

things are done in the name of the leader—as they were done in Christianity, in Islam, in Buddhism, in all major religions and lesser religions. Things done in the name of the leader are amplified by the members, who follow without thinking, without questioning, and you wind up in Guyana drinking poisoned Kool-Aid. So I wanted to create a charismatic leader (Paul Muad-Dib, the hero of the novel and film), a Messiah you would follow for all of the right reasons. He is loyal to his people, he's honorable and he's true to his friends. Every characteristic that you could possibly think of, including the prince in search of the Grail, is there in that character—you would follow him right into Camelot. And there is the power structure that grows up around him; that's what we deal with in the second book. That shook a lot of people. Here was a hero who didn't make everything all right. He created a power structure. He did it just by being there.

JMS: In the *Dune* books, you seem to question a number of other cultural assumptions. One of them is the belief that the establishment of a democracy necessarily addresses all of humankind's problems and needs.

HERBERT: One of the things I noticed as a reporter—I was a journalist longer than I've been on this side of the table—is that in all the marching in the streets in the '60s, the people who were shouting “Power to the People” didn't mean power to the people. They meant “power to me and I'll tell the people what to do.” When you questioned them it was confirmed at every turn.

Power to the people will really happen when the people wake up to the fact that you can't separate economics from politics, when they wake up to their own motivations, what they want, what can be sold to them. Because the real pitfall of democracy is that it is demagogue-prone. We like to have people stand up and tell us what we want to hear. I have conditioned myself so that the minute I hear a politician standing up there saying nice things that sound good to lot of people my alarm signals go off and I say, “Why, you damned son of a bitch, you're just another damned demagogue.”

I don't think there's a fucking bit of difference between a bureaucracy that is instituted by a democratic regime, a state; socialist regime, a communist regime or a capitalist regime. Take a

look at us right now. We have created a bureaucracy in this country which is completely out of the hands of the people. Your votes do not touch it. One day when I was working in Washington, D.C., as a speech-writer for a U.S. senator from Oregon, I was at a meeting of the Department of Commerce and a very, very high department official, a lifetime bureaucrat, was talking about another senator, who was giving them some trouble. And this high bureaucrat called this senator a “transient.” And sure enough, that senator was defeated in the next election. So he was a transient. But the bureaucrat was, still there, and he retired on a separate retirement system for the federal bureaucracy.

People ask me what I think about Reagan, or “Ray-gun,” as I tend to call him. Well, you know, he has several good things going for him. Number one, we know he's an actor. We tend not to think about other politicians as actors. But they all are. Mondale's an actor. I have good reports, accurate reports on him off-camera. Offstage he can be a real bastard to his people. You never see that when the smiling man gets up in front of the camera. He depends on his analyses to tell him what people want to hear. The other thing about Reagan is that I think he's pretty much beyond the age where he's easily corrupted. His foreign policy scares the shit out of me, but as long as he's paranoid of the bureaucracy I'll stand aside and applaud. And say, “Focus on that baby!” For that much I like him.

JMS: How do you feel we could put the power in the hands of the people?

HERBERT: Well, I think there are several ways to do it. Governments, being power centers, as I said before, attract the corrupt and the corruptible. So we have to go after the problem of how do we design our governments, so that we attract people who are not corruptible, or not easy to corrupt, anyway. The Romans solved it a long time ago. Before they got on their empire kick they went out and got a leader and said, “You're the boss for a year or two. But that's it!”

One of the things I would do—If I could wave a magic wand—I would give us a six-year presidency, no re-election. A two-term, maximum four-year senator, and a one-term, four-year congressman. If they can't discover how the system works in

Washington within a month of being there (hell, I discovered within two weeks of working for a senator), then they aren't bright enough to belong there. It's a privilege to work for your society. Not a right, not something earned by being there forever. We have to keep them in for short terms, attract good people with high, pay. And if I had my say about it, I'd make it a criminal offense with long prison terms for any military officer to accept a job with a defense after a retirement. That's handing the fox the key to the henhouse and saying, “I'm going to be gone for the night.” That's an invitation to corruption, and of course that's what we get.

We have the instruments and we have the precedents for handing power back to the people. I think government ought to be an experience. You know, when this government was formed it was called, worldwide, “The Great Experiment.” Somewhere along the line we carved it in stone. Experiments are things you test and find out what's wrong with them. Right?

I would experiment with a process that is now available to us. I would call it something like “The Great Theory.” I would select at random, on the basis of those who voted in the last election (we could do this easily now with computers), a rotating core group of 13 good people to serve at all levels of government, high and low. I would give them absolutely awesome powers, leave them in office for one year, and I would make it damn near a capital offense to interfere with the operations of this whole thing. I would set it up so that they had a budget, a sufficient budget, but no standing support facilities, no continuing bureaucracies. Every new committee would have to hire its own people and its own experts under a spoils system. And, at very high levels, I would give them the power of subpoena, the power to look in any place they wanted to look without question—and the power to fire.

Now let's go down to lowered levels. I discussed this with a member of the bureaucracy in the state of Washington, an official of the school system. He asked me, “How would you apply this?” I said: “Well, let's go to the local school district. Under my system any time the local school district proposes to spend over X amount of dollars, automatically such a review committee would be called into being. The members would be selected from among those who voted in the

previous election. They'd have the power of life and death over that proposal, the power to subpoena; they could go into the school system and examine the records back to the dawn of history. They could look at how the school system is operating, how it had been spending its money in the past."

This bureaucrat asked me, "Do you think they'll always make good decisions?" And I said, "No. But they'd only be there for a year and if they made a mistake it'd be very apparent and the next committee could deal with it." His next reaction, I thought, was just magnificent, very telling, almost like a classic Freudian slip. He said: "Do you think some damned housewife could understand what's going on in the school system that well?" [Laughs] I said: "You bet your sweet bippy I do!" Because if you put the responsibility on people, really put it on them, they rise to the occasion.

I would also make it impossible for any person who had served on one such committee ever to serve on one again. Once a lifetime. It would completely turn around what we think of as the democratic system, because it would make voting attractive. You'd want to be in on the chance to be selected for this. And you would know that one of you, somebody who voted, would be right in the seat of power if the need arose. I think it would really give power to the people, which is what democracy is supposed to be all about. Now all of the closet aristocrats will come out of the closet when you propose this kind of thing and say, "My God! At random you're going to get some real dopes!" And I would say: "What are the statistical probabilities that you would get 13 real dopes? Maybe you will. Maybe the monkeys will type the great novel."

JMS: What are the odds that you would get more dopes this way than by the present system?

HERBERT: [Laughs] I'm willing to gamble. Now I'll tell you something interesting in *my* reading of history: Every time we have pulled the lid off the human desire to govern our, own affairs, to be free of government—we've had a renaissance of some kind. We've had a social renaissance, we've had a political renaissance, an artistic renaissance. Every time in history we've unleashed this, we've gone forward by leaps and bounds. So I'm saying, "All right,

this is what history says to me. So why don't we do it again?" That's what I'm playing with in. the seventh *Dune* book, moving toward showing the kind of governments that finally evolve out of the situation I have created.

JMS: In *Dune*, written in the early '60s, you were one of the first to question the danger of modifying the ecology of a particular environment to try to "improve" human conditions.

HERBERT: Let me give you a little example on that one. About 20 years ago the U.S. and West Germany pooled their resources—well, we put in most of the bucks and the people—and went into North Africa, and all across most of the southern veldt of the Sahara. We dug a lot of tube wells—we drilled them, put pumps on them and brought water up. We did a good thing and then we walked away from it, more or less. Technologically we sure as hell walked away from it.

What happened was that they had more water and more grazing areas. More arable land was opened up, more cattle were put on the land, and the population grew to equal the new food supply. Then about five years ago, the rainfall, cyclic rainfall, decidedly decreased. Three years ago it went, practically dry. Of course the water table went down much faster because they were pumping. Right now as we sit here talking, 2,000 people a day are dying in that area. You can't go in and fix one thing to make everything all right in a complex situation. It's like an internal combustion engine. If there is only one thing wrong you may happen on the one thing that fixes it. But chances are much larger that by just doing one thing you create other problems you're going to have to adjust. And you have to keep adjusting until you create a balance.

For instance, one of the side effects of what we did in some of those North African villages was that we broke down the social system. Women previously went to the well for water, which they carried back on their heads, and the well was where they solved all their community problems. By piping water into the houses we cut off that link in their society and all hell broke loose. There were family feuds, murders, all kinds of things that had never occurred in these places, in that particular way, ever before. The Green Revolution was another, similar con game. We went in with a technologically

based system into primitive countries, and where before they had depended on manure and animals to pull their plows and that sort of thing, we made them dependent on special soil additives and special seed stock which was, by the way, very vulnerable to disease.

JMS: In *Dune* one of the groups is trying, through genetic manipulation and selective breeding, to produce a mental superman, a Kwisatz Haderach, who can see and predict the course of future history, guiding humanity along the best path for its development. But in *Children of Dune*, the hero's son, after achieving a state of radically expanded consciousness, says, “There is no Kwisatz Haderach.”

HERBERT: You know what we're discussing, don't you? We're discussing prescience, prediction, and free will. Very old ideas. I started analyzing what people really mean when they use these words. In the first place, and I've said this time and again, if I were to hand you right now an exact and unswervable heartbeat-by-heartbeat prediction that nothing could change your future or what's going to happen to you from now to the moment of your death, your life would be instant replay, an absolute and utter bore. You'd be sitting there at this instant saying: “Well, next he's going to say…” You'd know it all. Eighty tedious years if you're unlucky. Ten if you're lucky. That's why I blinded the hero in the second book. He doesn't need his eyes. He knows everything that is going to happen. He chose to put himself on that monorail.

What most people want when they talk about futurism—all the companies that hire me to play futurist for them—they don't want the future, they want now locked in. FDR, he did it. In 1933 he appointed a committee called the Brain Trust. They were given the primary job of “determining” what the course of technological development and innovation would be for the next 25 years and what influence this would have on our lives. What had they not come up with? That's the fascinating thing. Faster-than-sound travel, transistors, antibiotics, atomic power, World War II, are just a few small items that these Brain Trusters missed. What does this say to us? It says that if you look at history carefully the surprises are the things that turn us upside down as a society. Asimov in his

Foundation Trilogy has the *Second Foundation*, which can predict the course of the future, and he has his character *the Mule* in there, his wild card, but again totally within scientifically predictable norms. Horseshit!

What technology does to us is distribute the wild cards farther and farther afield. Because really what's going on is that the amount of energy that can be aimed and released is getting greater and greater and falling into the hands of smaller and smaller groups. The availability of this energy is also being disseminated all through this society. Something I proved conclusively in my research for *White Plague*. I got on the horn and I started calling suppliers of equipment I would need to engage in recombinant DNA research myself in my basement. I introduced myself only as Dr. Herbert. I didn't elaborate. You know, what's the difference between a Doctor of Letters and a Doctor of Medicine? Anyway, I asked, “How, does my purchasing department get your XR 21?” Their reply was, “When your check has cleared, we will ship.” Anything I wanted.

Now does that mean I want to clamp a lid on it? No way! That would only drive it underground and make a black market, which is what we do with hard drugs. We create a black market. A very profitable black market by the way, which can buy the inviolate Briefcases of diplomats, buy the police force of an entire major city or enough of it that it makes no never mind. You know what happened to the heroin the cops seized in The French Connection? It vanished from the police property room in New York City. You can't control these things with a lid. In fact if you try, like a pressure cooker, you only create dangerous, explosive pressure.

Survival of the species depends on adaptability, and that depends on variability, variation. I think that big government is one of the major dangers in our world. It tends to homogenize a society, and our strength is in our variations. The bigger it is, the worse it is. Small governments, small societies—developing their own mores, their own social systems, their own people, going their own ways to a limit—do not endanger their neighbors. I hope to God we get off the planet soon, because that's what will happen in space. The difficulty of communication across space at our present level of technology dictates that if we get off this planet with a viable

breeding population of humans, and if they scatter into different directions, each group is going to develop in its own way. Variation means the species will survive. And that's what I'm addressing in the *Dune* books.

JMS: You said earlier that your original vision of the *Dune* saga encompassed only the material in three volumes culminating with *Children of Dune*. Why did you write more?

HERBERT: I had a character who wouldn't get out of my head. it fascinated me to think of what kind of a society would develop if it was under the thumb of one individual for 3,500 years. You know, it's kind of like an amplification of the Pharaonic dynasties but all in one dynasty. So I had that character firmly in mind. It wouldn't get out. So I said, "Okay, here's your society after 3,500 years. What happens? What has happened? What do we become?" I was also questioning another major premise: that we know what peace is. And yet for that to be true, every person would have to know themselves in the classical sense. Every person would, have to know: "Why am I doing this? What are my motives? What is my unconscious direction?" Well, that is a big issue, you know. A much bigger issue than people generally realize. So I'm saying, "All right, you think you know peace and what it would mean and you think you know what the future can bring. Here's a guy that's going to give it to you for 3,500 years and enforce it. The only violence is his. Experience it for the term of the book, and see how you like it." It's a little demonstration project like *1984*.

And all of these premises are the same premise when you come right back to it. That evolution cuts off right here. And this is the destiny of humankind, not a death wish, in my books. That's what I'm playing with in the seventh book, moving toward showing the kind of government that finally evolves out of the situation I've been creating.

I've been playing these games all along. Not popular games. But obviously there are 15 million people worldwide who have said, "Hey, this is interesting." So I have an audience out there. And I'm talking to them, saying, "Take another look at a these precious premises upon which we have based our governments and our ideas of leadership. Let's take a good, long, hard look at things. Do they

really work or do we continue to make mistakes—the same mistakes over and over and over?

Liner Notes from *Frank Herbert Reads his Heretics of Dune Chapters I and II*

Cover art by John Schoenherr

Frank Herbert's saga of Dune has been called a multivolume supernovel, the ultimate science fiction work, because each time the work grows by the addition of another volume, the whole is made different. Rich networks of story and plot, the individual books do not merely follow one another in chronological order, they intersect through a common point. And that common point is the created universe of Dune—of Arrakis, the Guild, the Bene Gesserit, the spice. Frank Herbert's multiplex vision of this future universe given to us through the work cannot be seen in two dimensions, but must be imagined as a number of complex networks which intersect in three dimensions. Each individual volume is a unique pattern of characters and events that alters our audience perception of the shape of the whole "overwork."

The thematic material of the Dune supernovel is so varied and disparate, and yet so central to the real concerns of the everyday life of the individual human being in any historic period, that the

Dune world becomes a fascinating analog to our own civilization. And as the work grows, the Dune supernovel becomes a novel of issues as much as themes: politics, science and technology, ecology, religion, psychology and sociology are discussed and constantly reinterpreted against the changing schema of the series. Perhaps in the end the one great theme of Frank Herbert is the evolution of ideas, the largest theme the human group mind can encompass. The play of ideas is constant, and each one is looked at from different angles at different times, just as Paul is looked at as a changed character in *Dune Messiah,* from *Dune.* He changes, his role changes, his relation to the whole external universe alters and of course the universe itself changes independently. Herbert's sensitivity to all these changes and his consistent tough-mindedness in facing the necessity of real changes in his characters and his universe makes us keep reading, keep wanting more.

Heretics of Dune rewards and fulfills our expectations of flow and change, of high adventure, intensity and stimulation. Our perception of the Dune universe is once again resolved from a new angle, a new distance, so that a new focus is achieved. With the passage of time, the past has been partly forgotten, partly reinterpreted. Paul Atreides, messianic hero of the first trilogy of novels, has paled in importance, overshadowed by the oceanic presence of Leto II, now called the Tyrant. Paul is rarely spoken of in this universe, which he once ruled, except as an abiding mythic presence to the Bene Gesserit, the Kwisatz Haderach who superseded all their plans, whose genes grew out of their own breeding program and whose familial line is still of primary genetic importance. And the Sisterhood, as usual, has a plan. This time, though, it is the plan of the Bene Gesserit which is at the motivating center of the book, a less secure but still powerful and enduring scientific cult whose wish is to control and influence interstellar society in secret so as to be free to change the future of the human race, that method which Leto II's "Golden Path" overarched for thousands of years—and perhaps still does.

The heretics of the title include the central characters of the book, interlocking lives while pursuing disparate courses of action and holding differing beliefs. Orthodoxy is the enemy and it is precisely that thematic point which controls this volume in the series. Heresy

is perhaps the only free state in which a superior human mind can consider all the options in aid of solving a problem, answering a question of moral behavior, surviving as an individual.

In the episodes that open the book we are plunged once again into mystery and conflict, with characters and concerns on the largest scale, a plot at once thick and difficult to find a ground in. Yet we are still in the familiar universe of Dune, surrounded by the races and types, the details and technology we know so well from the prior books. The allusive familiarity of the setting gives Herbert enormous freedom to indulge in convoluted structures that would be impossible to maintain in a single novel of reasonable length, and in conversations between characters in which the major weight is carried to the reader through the perceptions of the omniscient narrative voice that illuminates their inner reactions and thoughts.

Perhaps in the end it is the narrative voice and mind of Frank Herbert that is the primary attraction of the great work. Through the constant presence of the author, with whom we identify, we become, for the moment, the godlike presence, intense, perceptive, clever, indirect and subtle.

We are not offered this reading experience elsewhere in contemporary fiction except in science fiction, and even in the SF field, never before on this scale. And with the release of *Heretics,* to be followed late this year by the major motion picture of *Dune,* the limits of popularity of what is already the most popular SF series of all time have surely not been reached.

-DAVID G. HARTWELL

David G. Hartwell is a well-known science fiction editor, reviewer and small press publisher. He was instrumental in the development of the Timescape Books program and is the author of a forthcoming book on the science fiction field. He was the editor of several of Frank Herbert's novels.

Although Frank Herbert is best known for his epic science fiction saga—*Dune, Dune Messiah, Children of Dune,* and *The Truths of Dune* —he has about twenty novels to his credit.

His first book, *Dragon in the Sea,* International Fantasy Award co-winner, is still in print and has just been reissued by Ballantine under its original title, *Under Pressure. Children of Dune,* published by Putnam's in 1976, is on the best seller lists all over the country.

Dune, winner of the World Science Fiction Convention Hugo award and the Science Fiction Writers of America Hebula award, is being made into a major motion picture. *The Dosadi Experiment,* his latest, has received extraordinary critical acclaim.

Mr. Herbert worked as a professional newspaperman for over 20 years on the west coast. Ten of these years were with the *San Francisco Examiner.* He lives with his family in Port Townsend, Washington—on the northeast corner of the northwest corner of the state, about 30 air miles from Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

One of his major interests is turning his six wooded acres into an Ecological Demonstration Project, with the object of showing how a high quality of life can be maintained with a minimum drain on the planet's total energy system.

Mr. Herbert has also recorded DUNE: THE BANQUET SCENE (TC 1555), SANDWORMS OF DUNE (TC 1565), BATTLES OF DUNE (TC 1601) and THE TRUTHS OF DUNE: Fear Is the Mind Killer (TC 1616) for Caedmon.

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Master of Dune

by Ross Stagner,
Psychology Today, 1984

"It may be," says Frank Herbert, "that the primary attraction of science fiction is that it helps us understand what it means to be human." The creation of understandable humans in understandable alien cultures on understandable other planets, he explains, must reflect in some way the present human condition. Exposing the unexamined assumptions of our society to an alien setting gives us a chance to look at and evaluate those assumptions from a different perspective, and in doing so, says Herbert, "science fiction does its greatest, most enduring work."

Herbert, born in 1920, has been involved in that work for nearly 30 years. His first science-fiction novel was published in 1956, and he has written more than 20 books since then. His most famous novel, Dune*, was published in 1965. Set on the barren planet of Dune, it examined the implications of life in a desert ecology and was hailed as an environmental-awareness book. The winner of two prestigious science-fiction writing awards,* Dune *has sold more than 10 million copies, spawned a series of four sequels and recently has been made into a motion picture. The next book in the* Dune *series,* Chapterhouse: Dune*, is due out next spring. And Herbert says the* Dune *novels will keep coming "as long as they interest me."*

Herbert has done research in psychology, anthropology, religion and linguistics, among other things, and has worked as a newspaper journalist, professional photographer, radio news commentator and oyster diver. He lives in Port Townsend, Washington.

Dune*, the basis of Herbert's fame, is a fascinating tale from the viewpoints of psychology, ecology, religion and politics. The scene, some thousands of years in the future, is a galactic empire organized on feudal lines. Duke Leto Atreides is ordered by the Emperor to take over the governance of a huge desert planet, Arrakis (called Dune by almost everyone), which is of great importance to the empire because it is the sole source of a mysterious spice, melange. This spice, secreted by the huge sandworms of Dune, prolongs the lives of those who use it up to*

800 years, gives them some degree of precognition (although not dependably) and enables the navigators of the huge interstellar spaceships to see "world lines" along which they can travel safely from star to star. The plot involves a conspiracy against Duke Leto. But there are numerous other conspiracies. We are introduced to a secret society called the Bene Gesserit (Herbert's play on the word "Jesuit"), a group of women dedicated to a selective-breeding experiment to create the ultimate human, whom they call the Kwisatz Haderach (this is based on the Kabbala of Jewish mysticism). Leto's son, Paul, is an offspring of this program, and ultimately proves to be the Kwisatz Haderach. He has, however, mental and physical powers not anticipated by the Bene Gesserit, who cannot manipulate him as they had planned. Ultimately, Paul becomes the messiah who leads the desert tribesmen on a jihad, a holy war, to destroy the oppressive empire. The movie Dune *will be released in December. Herbert would not say much about the film or its special effects, but he praised the project highly. His greatest enthusiasm, however, was reserved for the director, David Lynch, who won critical acclaim for* The Elephant Man *in 1980. He describes Lynch as having an amazing talent for converting pages of the novel into a single camera shot or at most a one-minute episode. Herbert also expressed satisfaction that the psychological aspects of the novel had been preserved in the film. "The movie begins as* Dune *begins. It ends as* Dune *ends," he says appreciatively, "and I hear my dialogue all the way through it."*

– Ross Stagner

STAGNER: How do you plan a novel, such as *Dune*?

HERBERT: Each novel begins with a problem. It might he the impact of diminishing natural resources, such as fossil fuels, or the consequences of a terrorist bombing. In *Dune* the problem is "how we make messiahs." This involves deciding on the personality traits of the putative messiah—charisma, leadership, a doctrine and skill in interpersonal relationships—and how these attributes must mesh with the features of the culture that selects, elevates and follows—or kills—the messiah.

STAGNER: I think you are saying that when people have enough problems, enough serious problems, they will seek a messiah and somewhere within the group one will arise. Social psychologists think along these lines when we try to explain phenomena like

Adolf Hitler or the Rev. Jim Jones of the infamous Jonestown massacre, the kind of charismatic leader whom people will follow blindly.

HERBERT: Yes. Messiahs can be hazardous to your health. That's what I set out to show in the first three books of the *Dune* series. The first thing I did was set up a messiah who would make decisions. He was the kind of person everybody would follow for the right reasons. He was honorable, loyal to his people, trustworthy, everything you could think of that you would admire in a leader. But then the power structure developed around him, and power attracts people who want power for the sake of power.

STAGNER: You mean the old saying that "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

HERBERT: That doesn't quite hit the mark. I have a theory that power attracts the corruptible.

STAGNER: You don't think that the mere possession of power can have a corrupting effect, that a person not originally attracted to power—but who gains it—will be inclined to misuse it?

HERBERT: I'm sure that can happen. But I still believe that those who are attracted to a power position, who actively seek a role that carries great power with it, are those with a predisposition to be corrupted by it.

STAGNER: And that's what happened in *Dune*?

HERBERT: That's what happens in the second book, *Dune Messiah*. And in *Children of Dune*, we have the terrible schismatic eruption and fragmentation of the power system. This is all a replay of elements of our own history—the Christian religion, Islam, Buddhism. If Jim Jones had endured, his system would have fragmented.

STAGNER: What does this teach us?

HERBERT: That messiahs are not with us forever. Even if their decisions are perfect, they set up power structures—churches,

political systems and so on—that are then taken over by others; they make human errors, and their errors are amplified by the members who follow blindly. To avoid this, we must question our leaders.

I'm also talking to the people who deal with psychology, and telling them to beware of the attitude that mama or papa knows best. We need to be very aware of our own motivations, and how those motivations gather followers. This comes right out of Carl Jung. He was very aware of this. You read his unpublished lecture notes, and you see him returning to this theme time and time again.

STAGNER: But didn't he become a messiah himself?

HERBERT: He was made into one by others. But he warned against it. He said such things as, “I am not for all time.”

STAGNER: So he was saying, “Don’t make me a messiah”?

HERBERT: Yes.

STAGNER: And all psychologists, political leaders, religious leaders and so on should take that stance?

HERBERT: That's right. And if we all took that attitude toward our social systems—political, economic and religious—then we would begin at least to weed out the demagogues.

STAGNER: How did the messiah theme lead to a desert?

HERBERT: Historically, most messiahs seem to have come from the wilderness. The decision to use a desert ecology as a background then led to the choice of Islam as a model for the theology of the novel and led to Arabic as the ancestor of the local language. I studied comparative linguistics and learned the rules for linguistic drift, the change in vowels and accents that occurs over long periods of time. I then took familiar Arabic words and modified them according to these rules to derive a futuristic Arabic.

STAGNER: Do you take the same pains in creating your characters?

HERBERT: After the plot has been sketched, I begin a folder for

each major character and invent a case history with heredity, early development, traumatic experiences, successes, unusual abilities, vocational interests and skills. If I happen to run across a photograph that fits the image of how this person should appear, I clip it and glue it to the folder. Then, when I want to write an episode that will reveal the character's decision-making style, or way of interacting with an authority figure, or stubbornness or integrity. I have at hand the basis for a consistent and psychologically congruent mode of speech and action.

STAGNER: The psychology of your novels seems to be heavily based on the work of Jung.

HERBERT: I'm not a disciple of Jung, but I do use his archetypes and symbolism. I'll go into archetypes that may dominate a character's life.

STAGNER: You mean you develop your characters according to Jung.

HERBERT: Yes. Chani is feeling-thinking. She stresses those opposites. Jessica is the same. So the two dominant women in *Dune* are set up this way. And I went for other archetypal figures throughout the book. I have the young prince in search of the grail, the wise old man and the fool, the one who can say, "You're naked," to the king.

STAGNER: And your largest symbol, the gigantic, melange-producing sandworms of *Dune*?

HERBERT: The sandworm is the mindless monster of the deep who guards the pearl of great price. It is the black bull of the corrida, the dragon that dances in the streets at Chinese New Year. The pearl of great price, of course, is melange. It extends life and also extends the senses of the users. This gives me another chance to introduce the sensing-personality type in some of my characters.

STAGNER: Did you have any formal training in psychology?

HERBERT: I stumbled onto a pair of psychologist-psychoanalysts and worked with them for a while. It wasn't a traditional analysis,

but they influenced my thinking a great deal. She had a whole set of Jung's lecture notes, unpublished notes, on a rack around their living room: they completely circled the room, a rather large mop. I found that very impressive. These people directed my reading and thinking and gave me the equivalent of a doctorate in psychology in 3½ years.

STAGNER: That suggests real dedication to your work, as does your decision to live in such an isolated community.

HERBERT: That's why we chose Port Townsend. It's off the beaten track sufficiently that I can be isolated when I am writing. I am less likely to be interrupted by fans. I don't like to turn fans away, but…

STAGNER: Sure. Your fans, after all, contribute to your welfare and well-being.

HERBERT: It's much more than that. They give you feedback on what you have been publishing. Unless you get that kind of feedback, you will get farther and farther up in your ivory tower, and you don't know what the hell is going on in your world. That's also my reason for avoiding the lecture platform.

STAGNER: You mean that on the platform you can't get feedback?

HERBERT: Well, I change the routine every chance I get. I get off the platform, down on the floor, and talk to individuals. I carry a radio mike and walk up and down the aisles. We get a rap session going. It's a nice form of exchange, where you are really finding out what is bothering people in this particular audience. Because when you are talking about science fiction, you generally are into mythology—the mythology of this universe, and especially this planet. Science fiction, or speculative fiction, is a form of myth. Out of this discussion will come questions that show what things are disturbing people.

STAGNER: Then you try to answer these questions and address the relevant problems by examining them under the light of an alien culture?

HERBERT: I think science-fiction writers are unique in that we

don't have the limits on our patterns of association that most writers do. Realistic writers must offer mostly familiar, conformist associations. Science-fiction writers aren't tied down to this planet, or these kinds of humans, or these definitions of what is truly alien.

STAGNER: Maybe that is why so many commentators refer to science fiction as escapist literature.

HERBERT: Yes, there is an escapist element in science fiction. I think that, from my own point of view, what I build into what I'm writing—and I work very hard to do this—is some escapism. I try to give people experiences that they could not have any other way, take them to places they have never experienced, where they witness events that could not occur except on that page.

STAGNER: But what about the message you try to work in, the messiah?

HERBERT: Sure, you can put a pot of message in with your mess of pottage. But if it doesn't interest readers, you've wasted your efforts.

STAGNER: You mean, develop the story and spread a message underneath it, or something like that?

HERBERT: Sure, you layer it through. But writers, especially science-fiction writers, have to realize that primarily we are in the entertainment business. Only when you catch the reader's interest can you hope to have him or her be influenced by your message.

STAGNER: Plausible accounts of the future must be enough to stir the interest of many readers. Do people often ask you to predict the future for them?

HERBERT: That’s something I run into all the time when I'm asked to teach futurism or to speak to futurist societies. They don't want you to sit there and give them a second-by-second, heartbeat-by-heartbeat outline of everything that's going to happen to them for the rest of their lives. What these futurists want is what U.S. Steel is going to do next week on the big board. And while you're at it, give me a couple of winners at Hialeah. Well, science fiction doesn't do that, it examines the human condition in alien surroundings and

speculates on possible futures.

STAGNER: But over the years science-fiction writers have described things that eventually became part of our lives. Do you see yourself as a predictor at all! Would you be surprised if 200 years from now people were sitting around saying, “My God, Frank Herbert told us about that”?

HERBERT: I'm a pathfinder. It may not be a path anybody wants to follow. I'm just saying there it is. I've been then, and it's interesting country.

Ross Stagner is a social psychologist at Wayne Stare University who has dabbled in science-fiction writing. His work has been published in Astounding Stories *magazine.*

Lost Interview: Futuristic Meditations from Dune's Frank Herbert

Interview by Jean Marie Stine

[This never-before reprinted conversation was originally published in an issue of the L. A. Reader in mid-1984 (at the time of the movie release). During our post-interview conversation Frank, who was on his way to climb the Himalayas with Sherpa guides, mentioned that he had just written the outline for what would be the final Dune book and he and an attorney had put a copy in a safe deposit box until he returned just in case anything happened to him. On his way to the Himalayas, Frank was diagnosed with a fast moving cancer, and passed away a few months later. Twenty years on, I discovered that no one in the Herbert family had known of the outline, and that its existence had only recently been discovered.]

> *"A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct. This every sister of the Bene Gesserit knows, To begin your study of the life of Muad'Dib, then take care that you first place him in his time: born in the 57th year of the Padishah Emperor, Shaddam IV. And take the most special care that you locate Muad'Dib in his place: the planet Arrakis … Arrakis, the Planet known as Dune, is forever his place."*

Part I

Published in Futures-Past Editions blog,
October 29, 2013

In 1965, after being turned down by 22 different publishers despite its enthusiastically received serialization in Analog, Frank Herbert's Dune was published in a tiny edition, of 2,000 copies by a small house known principally for auto-repair manuals. Later that year, the paperback rights were picked by a publisher of genre fiction, notorious for never paying

royalties. Herbert's earnings from both editions of his monumental vision (700-plus pages) totaled a modest $2,500.

Nearly 20 years later, Dune and its successors have become massive-selling cult classics, their success aided by a terrific series of plugs in the Whole Earth Catalog and avid proselytizing by hardcore fans. The fourth book, bearing the unlikely title God Emperor of Dune, seemed to be permanently ensconced on the New York Times bestseller list, and the Fifth, Heritage of Dune, has also made the list. And David Lynch's filmed version of Dune was reportedly one of the most expensive movies ever made (for its era).

The Dune cycle blends traditional science-fiction elements—supermen, galactic intrigue, alien ecology, panoramic battles between good and evil, etcetera—with what the Science Fiction Encyclopedia terms "complex intellectual discourse and genuinely developed concepts." A common theme in his work is an extrapolation of evolution, and how natural selection creates humanoids able to thrive in the most extreme environments.

Herbert grew up and was educated in Washington state and spent two decades as a reporter and photographer for newspapers in the Northwest before becoming a full-time novelist. (He was one of the first photojournalists to use a 35mm camera.) Since then, he has been peripatetic to an extreme, living on and traveling to countless islands and at least five continents. He next plans to explore the terrain surrounding Mt. Everest, with several Sherpa pals, and to document the East/West culture clash in that altitudinous zone.

But when this interview was conducted, he was comfortably settled in an airy condo on Manhattan Beach's boardwalk. State-of-the-art stereo equipment dominated the absolutely uncluttered living room. There are no books in sight. Herbert, clean-shaven, looked like a handsomer Jack Albertson, and was much thinner than the dust-jacket portrait would lead you to believe. Before and after the interview, he chatted fluently on subjects ranging from the latest camera gear to the intricacies of piloting small aircraft, and seemed genuinely pleased to be interviewed.

JMS: Dune is your most celebrated, successful and in many ways most personal book. Certainly you must have approached the movie

version with a very critical eye. What did you think of it?

HERBERT: Some people who haven't read the book are a bit confused. About 20 percent of these are put off. The others are saying, "I missed something. I'm going to go back and see it again or read the book." But I don't want to be in a position of just flogging the book. It's a great movie. Really, David has done a damned fine job. Pictorially and texturally it's beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze frame shots and say, "I want that one on my wall, and that one, and that one." David's a painter; he had Tony Masters there as production designer, for God's sake. And his choice of visual metaphors is really superb. The idea of rococo Renaissance background art … well, I recreated a medieval feudal society. So what does Renaissance art say to Western viewers? It says feudatory, right? You don't even need to mention it. It took me many pages to create the effect on paper he creates in two seconds with a shot.

The only way this movie could have been made was if they spent megabucks on it. And to be pragmatic about it, that meant they had to do a production they could show in theaters everywhere, and that meant that they had to cut it. Luckily, we have about five hours of film. In fact, we have as much film on the cutting room floor as we have on the screen. All the scenes that everybody misses from the book are all there. So we are now discussing doing a special mini-series for T.V. about three or four years down the pike essentially the uncut version of the film.

Part II

Published in Futures-Past Editions blog,
November 11, 2013

JMS: The First Dune book (the one the movie was based on) taken by itself seems pretty straightforward good guys vs. bad guys stuff, with the good guys triumphing at the end. But in the second book you question a number of assumptions you led the reader to make in the first book and you reveal a much more complex and meaningful design than was apparent in the first book alone.

HERBERT: The first three books were one book in my head. I wrote parts of the second two before I completed the first. In fact I wrote the last chapter of the first one before I finished it. I did develop the other two a bit more because I thought of new stuff. But when I finished that third book I thought I was through with it. I had a theory. Charismatic leaders—not necessarily Messiahs, but Messiahs included—tend to create explosive upheavals in human societies which are very dangerous to individuals and to the societies themselves, because they create power structures. So you get these centers of power and it doesn't matter a damned bit how pure and good the hero is. By just being he creates a power structure and so it's like a magnet: the iron filings, the corruptible, come in and things are done in the name of the leader—as they were done in Christianity, in Islam, in Buddhism, in all major religions and lesser religions. Things done in the name of the leader are amplified by the members, who follow without thinking, without questioning, and you wind up in Guyana drinking poisoned Kool-Aid. So I wanted to create a charismatic leader (Paul Muad-Dib, the hero of the novel and film), a Messiah you would follow for all of the right reasons. He is loyal to his people, he's honorable and he's true to his friends. Every characteristic that you could possibly think of, including the prince in search of the Grail, is there in that character —you would follow him right into Camelot. And there is the power structure that grows up around him; that's what we deal with in the second book. That shook a lot of people. Here was a hero who didn't make everything all right. He created a power structure. He did it just by being there.

JMS: In the Dune books, you seem to question a number of other cultural assumptions. One of them is the belief that the establishment of a democracy necessarily addresses all of humankind's problems and needs.

HERBERT: One of the things I noticed as a reporter—I was a journalist longer than I've been on this side of the table—is that in all the marching in the streets in the '60s, the people who were shouting "Power to the People" didn't mean power to the people. They meant "power to me and I'll tell the people what to do." When you questioned them it was confirmed at every turn.

Power to the people will really happen when the people wake up to the fact that you can't separate economics from politics, when they wake up to their own motivations, what they want, what can be sold to them. Because the real pitfall of democracy is that it is demagogue-prone. We like to have people stand up and tell us what we want to hear. I have conditioned myself so that the minute I hear a politician standing up there saying nice things that sound good to lot of people my alarm signals go off and I say, "Why, you damned son of a bitch, you're just another damned demagogue.

I don't think there's a fucking bit of difference between a bureaucracy that is instituted by a democratic regime, a state; socialist regime, a communist regime or a capitalist regime. Take a look at us right now. We have created a bureaucracy in this country which is completely out of the hands of the people. Your votes do not touch it. One day when I was working in Washington, D.C. as a speech-writer for a U.S. senator from Oregon, I was at a meeting of the Department of Commerce and a very, very high department official, a lifetime bureaucrat, was talking about another senator, who was giving them some trouble. And this high bureaucrat called this senator a "transient." And sure enough, that senator was defeated in the next election. So he was a transient. But the bureaucrat was, still there, and he retired on a separate retirement system for the federal bureaucracy.

People ask me what I think about Reagan, or "Ray-gun," as I tend to call him. Well, you know, he has several good things going for him. Number one, we know he's an actor. We tend not to think about other politicians as actors. But they all are. Mondale's an actor. I have good reports, accurate reports on him off camera. Offstage he can be a real bastard to his people. You never see that when the smiling man gets up in front of the camera. He depends on his analyses to tell him what people want to hear. The other thing about Reagan is that I think he's pretty much beyond the age where he's easily corrupted. His foreign policy scares the shit out of me, but as long as he's paranoid of the bureaucracy I'll stand aside and applaud. And say, "Focus on that baby!" For that much I like him.

JMS: How do you feel we could put the power in the hands of the people?

HERBERT: Well, I think there are several ways to do it. Governments, being power centers, as I said before, attract the corrupt and the corruptible. So we have to go after the problem of how do we design our Governments, so that we attract people who are not corruptible, or not easy to corrupt, anyway. The Romans solved it a long time ago. Before they got on their empire kick they went out and got a leader and said, "You're the boss for a year or two. But that's it!"

One of the things I would do—If I could wave a magic wand—I would give us a six-year presidency, no re-election. A two-term, maximum four-year senator, and a one-term, four-year congressman. If they can't discover how the system works in Washington within a month of being there (hell, I discovered within two weeks of working for a senator), then they aren't bright enough to belong there. It's a privilege to work for your society. Not a right, not something earned by being there forever. We have to keep them in for short terms, attract good people with high pay. And if I had my say about it, I'd make it a criminal offense with long prison terms for any military officer to accept a job with a defense after a retirement. That's handing the fox the key to the henhouse and saying, "I'm going to be gone for the night." That's an invitation to corruption, and of course that's what we get.

We have the instruments and we have the precedents for handing power back to the people. I think government ought to be an experience. You know, when this government was formed it was called, worldwide, "The Great Experiment." Somewhere along the line we carved it in stone. Experiments are things you test and find out what's wrong with them. Right?

I would experiment with a process that is now available to us. I would call it something like "The Great Theory." I would select at random, on the basis of those who voted in the last election (we could do this easily now with computers), a rotating core group of 13 good people to serve at all levels of government, high and low. I would give them absolutely awesome powers, leave them in office for one year, and I would make it damn near a capital offense to interfere with the operations of this whole thing. I would set it up so that they had a budget, a sufficient budget, but no standing

support facilities, no continuing bureaucracies. Every new committee would have to hire its own people and its own experts under a spoils system. And, at very high levels, I would give them the power of subpoena, the power to look in any place they wanted to look without question—and the power to fire.

Now let's go down to lowered levels. I discussed this with a member of the bureaucracy in the state of Washington, an official of the school system. He asked me, "How would you apply this?" I said: "Well, let's go to the local school district. Under my system any time the local school district proposes to spend over X amount of dollars, automatically such a review committee would be called into being. The members would be selected from among those who voted in the previous election. They'd have the power of life and death over that proposal, the power to subpoena; they could go into the school system and examine the records back to the dawn of history. They could look at how the school system is operating, how it had been spending its money in the past."

This bureaucrat asked me, "Do you think they'll always make good decisions?" And I said, "No. But they'd only be there for a year and if they made a mistake it'd be very apparent and the next committee could deal with it." His next reaction, I thought, was just magnificent, very telling, almost like a classic Freudian slip. He said: "Do you think some damned housewife could understand what's going on in the school system that well?" [Laughs] I said: "You bet your sweet bippy I do!" Because if you put the responsibility on people, really put it on them, they rise to the occasion.

I would also make it impossible for any person who had served on one such committee ever to serve on one again. Once a lifetime. It would completely turn around what we think of as the democratic system, because it would make voting attractive. You'd want to be in on the chance to be selected for this. And you would know that one of you, somebody who voted, would be right in the seat of power if the need arose. I think it would really give power to the people, which is what democracy is supposed to be all about. Now all of the closet aristocrats will come out of the closet when you propose this kind of thing and say, "My God! At random you're

going to get some real dopes!" And I would say, "What are the statistical probabilities that you would get 13 real dopes? Maybe you will. Maybe the monkeys will type the great novel."

JMS: What are the odds that you would get more dopes this way than by the present system?

HERBERT: [Laughs] I'm willing to gamble. Now I'll tell you something interesting in MY reading of history: Every time we have pulled the lid off the human desire to govern our, own affairs, to be free of government—we've had a renaissance of some kind. We've had a social renaissance, we've had a political renaissance, an artistic renaissance. Every time in history we've unleashed this, we've gone forward by leaps and bounds. So I'm saying, "All right, this is what history says to me. So why don't we do it again?" That's what I'm playing with in. the seventh Dune book, moving toward showing the kind of governments that finally evolve out of the situation I have created.

Part III

Published in Futures-Past Editions blog,
November 25, 2013

JMS: In Dune, written in the early '60s, you were one of the first to question the danger of modifying the ecology of a particular environment to try to "improve" human conditions.

HERBERT: Let me give you a little example on that one. About 20 years ago the U.S. and West Germany pooled their resources—well, we put in most of the bucks and the people—and went into North Africa, and all across most of the southern veldt of the Sahara. We dug a lot of tube wells—we drilled them, put pumps on them and brought water up. We did a good thing and then we walked away from it, more or less. Technologically we sure as hell walked away from it.

What happened was that they had more water and more grazing areas. More arable land was opened up, more cattle were put on the land, and the population grew to equal the new food supply. Then

about five years ago, the rainfall, cyclic rainfall, decidedly decreased. Three years ago it went, practically dry. Of course the water table went down much faster because they were pumping. Right now as we sit here talking, 2,000 people a day are dying in that area. You can't go in and fix one thing to make everything all right in a complex situation. It's like an internal combustion engine. If there is only one thing wrong you may happen on the one thing that fixes it. But chances are much larger that by just doing one thing you create other problems you're going to have to adjust. And you have to keep adjusting until you create a balance.

For instance, one of the side effects of what we did in some of those North African villages was that we broke down the social system. Women previously went to the well for water, which they carried back on their heads, and the well was where they solved all their community problems. By piping water into the houses we cut off that link in their society and all hell broke loose. There were family feuds, murders, all kinds of things that had never occurred in these places, in that particular way, ever before. The Green Revolution was another, similar con game. We went in with a technologically based system into primitive countries, and where before they had depended on manure and animals to pull their plows and that sort of thing, we made them dependent on special soil additives and special seed stock which was, by the way, very vulnerable to disease.

JMS: In Dune one of the groups is trying, through genetic manipulation and selective breeding, to produce a mental superman, a Kwisatz Haderach, who can see and predict the course of future history, guiding humanity along the best path for its development. But in Children of Dune, the hero's son, after achieving a state of radically expanded consciousness, says, "There is no Kwisatz Haderach."

HERBERT: You know what we're discussing, don't you? We're discussing prescience, prediction, and free will. Very old ideas. I started analyzing what people really mean when they use these words. In the first place, and I've said this time and again, if I were to hand you right now an exact and unswervable heartbeat-by-heartbeat prediction that nothing could change your future or

what's going to happen to you from now to the moment of your death, your life would be instant replay, an absolute and utter bore. You'd be sitting there at this instant saying: "Well, next he's going to say…" You'd know it all. Eighty tedious years if you're unlucky. Ten if you're lucky. That's why I blinded the hero in the second book. He doesn't need his eyes. He knows everything that is going to happen. He chose to put himself on that monorail.

What most people want when they talk about futurism—all the companies that hire me to play futurist for them—they don't want the future, they want now locked in. FDR, he did it. In 1933 he appointed a committee called the Brain Trust. They were given the primary job of "determining" what the course of technological development and innovation would be for the next 25 years and what influence this would have on our lives. What had they not come up with? That's the fascinating thing. Faster-than-sound travel, transistors, antibiotics, atomic power, World War II, are just a few small items that these Brain Trusters missed. What does this say to us? It says that if you look at history carefully the surprises are the things that turn us upside down as a society. Asimov in his Foundation Trilogy has the Second Foundation, which can predict the course of the future, and he has his character the Mule in there, his wild card, but again totally within scientifically predictable norms. Horseshit!

What technology does to us is distribute the wild cards farther and farther afield. Because really what's going on is that the amount of energy that can be aimed and released is getting greater and greater and falling into the hands of smaller and smaller groups. The availability of this energy is also being disseminated all through this society. Something I proved conclusively in my research for White Plague. I got on the horn and I started calling suppliers of equipment I would need to engage in recombinant DNA research myself in my basement. I introduced myself only as Dr. Herbert. I didn't elaborate. You know, what's the difference between a Doctor of Letters and a Doctor of Medicine? Anyway, I asked, "How, does my purchasing department get your XR 21?" Their reply was, "When your check has cleared, we will ship." Anything I wanted.

Now does that mean I want to clamp a lid on it? No way! That

would only drive it underground and make a black market, which is what we do with hard drugs. We create a black market. A very profitable black market by the way, which can buy the inviolate Briefcases of diplomats, buy the police force of an entire major city or enough of it that it makes no never mind. You know what happened to the heroin the cops seized in *The French Connection*? It vanished from the police property room in New York City. You can't control these things with a lid. In fact if you try, like a pressure cooker, you only create dangerous, explosive pressure.

Survival of the species depends on adaptability, and that depends on variability, variation. I think that big government is one of the major dangers in our world. It tends to homogenize a society, and our strength is in our variations. The bigger it is, the worse it is. Small governments, small societies—developing their own mores, their own social systems, their own people, going their own ways to a limit—do not endanger their neighbors. I hope to God we get off the planet soon, because that's what will happen in space. The difficulty of communication across space at our present level of technology dictates that if we get off this planet with a viable breeding population of humans, and if they scatter into different directions, each group is going to develop in its own way. Variation means the species will survive. And that's what I'm addressing in the Dune books.

JMS: You said earlier that your original vision of the Dune saga encompassed only the material in three volumes culminating with Children of Dune. Why did you write more?

HERBERT: I had a character who wouldn't get out of my head. it fascinated me to think of what kind of a society would develop if it was under the thumb of one individual for 3,500 years. You know, it's kind of like an amplification of the Pharaonic dynasties but all in one dynasty. So I had that character firmly in mind. It wouldn't get out. So I said, "Okay, here's your society after 3,500 years. What happens? What has happened? What do we become?" I was also questioning another major premise: that we know what peace is. And yet for that to be true, every person would have to know themselves in the classical sense. Every Person would, have to know: "Why am I doing this? What are my motives? What is my

unconscious direction?" Well, that is a big issue, you know. A much bigger issue than people generally realize. So I'm saying, "All right, you think you know peace and what it would mean and you think you know what the future can bring. Here's a guy that's going to give it to you for 3,500 years and enforce it. The only violence is his. Experience it for the term of the book, and see how you like it." It's a little demonstration project like *1984*.

And all of these premises are the same premise when you come right back to it. That evolution cuts off right here. And this is the destiny of humankind, not a death wish, in my books. That's what I'm playing with in the seventh book, moving toward showing the kind of government that finally evolves out of the situation I've been creating.

I've been playing these games all along. Not popular games. But obviously there are 15 million people worldwide who have said, "Hey, this is interesting." So I have an audience out there. And I'm talking to them, saying, "Take another look at a these precious premises upon which we have based our governments and our ideas of leadership. Let's take a good, long, hard look at things. Do they really work or do we continue to make mistakes—the same mistakes over and over and over?

The Long, Long Road to
DUNE

by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier

From *Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone* Magazine
December 1984

One version would have been ten hours long and heavy with mysticism. The one you'll see in December is shorter, slicker—and ten times more expensive.

The final special effects have been completed, the sets have been tom down, the play dates are all booked, and the mammoth publicity campaign has already begun. Whether *Dune* will be the blockbuster that producers Dino and Raffaella De Laurentiis hope for is anybody's guess, but one thing is certain: when it opens this December, it will be the most eagerly awaited science fiction film of all time. As far back as the 1983 World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore, for example, when writer Paul Sammon showed slides of the production and his video featurette, *Destination: Dune,* the preview drew thousands of fans, who saw author Frank Herbert

explaining on tape that he was totally satisfied with the film adaptation of his book.

Herbert's interplanetary epic first saw print in 1963 in the sf magazine *Analog* under the title "Dune World," and was published as the novel *Dune* in 1965. It quickly proved to be one of the most remarkable works of science fiction ever written—and an unprecedented bestseller. Winner of the Hugo and Nebula awards, printed in millions of copies, and translated into more than a dozen languages, the saga has been carried on through four sequels: *Dune Messiah* (1969), *Children of Dune* (1976), *God-Emperor of Dune* (1981), and, this year, *Heretics of Dune.* In 1983 Herbert signed a multimillion-dollar contract for a sixth volume in the series, tentatively titled *Chapter House: Dune,* and, it's reported, has already delivered the manuscript to his publisher. In a recent *Newsweek* interview the sixty-three-year-old author declared, "I haven't another one in mind"—but it's hard to imagine Herbert abandoning his greatest creation.

THE *DUNE* THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Dune's colossal success quickly attracted Hollywood attention, but the translation of the saga from the pages of a pulp magazine to the silver screen was anything but a simple process, rivaling the labyrinthine intrigues of Herbert's novel. One of the first to be interested in acquiring film rights, in the late 1960s, was *Planet of the Apes* producer Arthur P. Jacobs. According to a 1975 interview with James Herbert, Jacobs's company, Apjac Productions, planned to film *Dune* in an area northeast of Ankara, Turkey, with Herbert himself as technical advisor. At that time, the film was still in the treatment stage; no director or scriptwriter had been chosen. The project was abandoned when, in 1973, Jacobs died suddenly of a heart attack.

Director Lynch.

The next person to acquire rights to the book was a wealthy Frenchman, Michel Seydoux. To write and direct the film, Seydoux called on Chilean-born filmmaker Alexandro Jodorowsky, whose previous credits included the surreal epics *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain.* Jodorowsky was assisted during all phases of preproduction by French comic-book artist Jean Giraud, well known in the U.S. as "Moebius" for his work in *Heavy Metal* magazine. Under the director's guidance, Giraud created over a thousand pages of extremely elaborate storyboards and designs. "For me," Jodorowsky told an interviewer in 1976, "Giraud is a complete artist. He is not only a comic-book author, but he is also a painter and a poet."

Would-be mystic Jodorowsky.

Frank “Moebius” Giraud’s design for the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam.

Jodorowsky's plans called for the artifacts, costumes, and sets of each of *Dune's* four planets to be designed by a different well-known sf artist. Giraud was to design the civilization on Caladan, the forest-covered world of the Atreides. The golden octagonal fortress-planet of the Emperor was to be conceived by British illustrator Christopher Foss, celebrated for his ultrarealistic depictions of spaceships and futuristic technology. Gedi Prime, stonghold of the corrupt and sadistic Harkonnen, was to be designed by Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger, who created the look of the Ridley Scott film *Alien.* American comic-book artist Richard Corben, author of "Den" and other *Heavy Metal* fare, was to bring to life the planet of the Bene Gesserit, with its weird pyramidal edifices.

Music, too, was to be an integral part of Jodorowsky's vision of *Dune,* with different rock groups contributing their own special

styles to each planet. Pink Floyd had accepted the assignment of the Imperial Planet; a popular French band, Magma, was to create a score for the Harkonnen homeworld; and the British group Henry Cow was to provide music for the Bene Gesserit. Originally, special effects were to have been handled by Douglas *(Brainstorm)* Trumbull; later, impressed by his work on John Carpenter's *Dark Star,* Jodorowsky planned to entrust them to Dan O'Bannon. O'Bannon met with Giger and Giraud in France, later bringing Giger to work with him on *Alien.*

Filming of Jodorwsky's *Dune* was to take place in Tassili, in the Sahara Desert, with hundreds of actors and extras. Among the actors mentioned for the film were Jodorowsky's own son, Brontis, in the central role of Paul Atreides. Salvador Dali had been considered for the role of the Padishah Emperor (in fact, Giraud's original concept for the character is a likeness of the famous Spanish artist), but he fell prey to a political disagreement with Jodorowsky when he condoned Franco's execution of several young Basque militants—a stand the director found "so odious," as he told a French film magazine in 1976, that he preferred to tear up the contract. Perhaps more to the point are rumors that the aging painter had demanded a salary of $100,000 an hour!

The most interesting aspect of Jodorowsky's project was undoubtedly his personal vision of *Dune.* "I interpret and continue the book," he told an interviewer. "I don't believe that one should take a novel and fail to put it at one's service. As the anarchists say, 'Neither God nor master!' I take the torch and continue further on. If not, it's not really worth it." Jodorowsky spent two years writing a scenario which was then dialogued by French sf author Michel Demuth, who'd translated Frank Herbert's work.

A group of Fremen—with Stilgar (Everett McGill) in center—watches an offscreen Paul Atreides prove himself as a sandrider.

In his screenplay, Jodorowsky went beyond the Herbert novel. At the end of his version, the death of Paul the Prophet "fertilizes" the planet Dune and turns it into a giant collective intelligence, a living planet. This new Dune, in turn, gives birth to a living, sentient galaxy, and onward, until the attainment of a communal, completely spiritual universe, one with man. Inherent in these concepts are certain mystical themes dear to Jodorowsky. For him, the spice that the planet exports is the science fictional equivalent of the "projection powder" of the alchemists, those medieval experimenters who, in seeking the fabled Philosopher's Stone which could transmute matter into purer elements and baser metals into gold, were also seeking to spiritually transform and purify themselves.

The climactic duel between Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan) and Feyd (Sting).

Because of Paul's efforts, the planet Dune itself becomes a giant Philosopher's Stone which enables the entire human race to realize its collective goal and become one with God.

Jodorowsky's *Dune* was scheduled to begin filming in September of 1975, but the incredible amount of preproduction work that the director insisted upon held up the starting date by almost two years. (In a 1983 interview in *Starlog,* Frank Herbert estimated that the film Jodorowsky was planning "couldn't have been done in less than ten hours.") In the end the production costs, originally set at $6 million, had escalated to $9.5 million. Unable to find new sources of financing, producer Seydoux was forced to abandon the project.

Its failure did not discourage other producers; rights to the entire *Dune* series were eventually purchased by Dino De Laurentiis, who had already brought the world *King Kong* and *Conan.* Since Herbert's novel had originally been recommended to him by his daughter Raffaella, De Laurentiis made her the producer of the film. In January, 1980, he asked Ridley Scott to direct. Scott, who had just completed *Alien,* worked on the project for nine months, once more hiring H.R. Giger to create numerous storyboards and production designs and hiring pop novelist Rudolph Wurlitzer to write a script.

(Herbert was reportedly infuriated when, on reading the first draft, he came across an incestuous sex scene that Wurlitzer had injected between Paul and Jessica, their union producing the child Alia—a far cry from the novel's explanation of her origin.) Scott finally abandoned *Dune* when its budget reached an estimated $50 million and went on to do a more restrained sf project, *Blade Runner.*

It was Raffaella who suggested David Lynch, director of the underground classic *Eraserhead* and of the widely acclaimed *The Elephant Man,* which her father had liked. "Dino had never seen *Eraserhead*," Lynch told a 1983 interviewer, "and if he had, he probably wouldn't have hired me. All his kids saw *Eraserhead* in his living room, and I think he just walked through and saw about ten minutes of it, at most."

Lynch was given a contract not only to direct, but to write the script in conjunction with Eric Bergren and Christopher DeVore, who had helped Lynch script *The Elephant Man.* Not having read *Dune* before, Lynch set about discovering the book. "I liked the different worlds," he says, "and the fact that it was more realistic than *Star Wars*."

By the third draft, Bergren and DeVore were out, and in eighteen months Lynch delivered his own screenplay. After a half-dozen revisions, De Laurentiis declared himself satisfied. "I'd have deadlines," Lynch remembers, "then we'd have script conferences. Then I'd go back to rewrite and have more deadlines and more script conferences! Then, during the scriptwriting period, we also started to design the picture. The production designer came on, the costume designer came on, et cetera. We started casting and looking for locations. During all this time, I had to be writing. It was plenty of work to do!"

THE *DUNE* WE'LL GET

For various practical reasons, Universal and De Laurentiis decided to shoot *Dune* at the Churubusco Studios in Mexico, and the official budget was set at $30 million. (This has reportedly climbed to more than $60 million.) In an interview on the set with the *San Diego Union,* Rafaella De Laurentiis weighed the savings and the costs of filming in Mexico: "You have to figure on something taking three times as long as it might take in another place, but you do get it

done," she said. "In the building of the sets here we have saved fifty percent, but that's the only area. The cost differences are not that great. Maybe if you come here to do a regular modern movie, the picture will be cheaper. But with *Dune* we had to create a whole world and bring in entire crews, put them up in hotels and send them home when their marriages were breaking up. This takes a lot away from the cost-effectiveness of cheaper labor … Nowhere else in the world are there eight stages where we could work. In England, we would have to use three studios to get this much space."

"It was the only place to make the film," confirms Lynch, "for pretty nearly every reason you can think of. We had seventy-five sets, we had eight giant sound stages, and the desert was right up the road!" Was Lynch concerned about shooting in a country that has its own problems, both political and financial? "That makes it exciting!" he says. "There's always something going wrong. There's always something happening, and always something to talk about. It's a fantastic world."

Filming began on March 30, 1983, with Frank Herbert present to give the first clap of the clapboard. The shoot lasted for twenty-three weeks, finishing on September 20, but was followed by extensive postproduction, including the preparation of more special effects. From the start, the film was surrounded by great secrecy, and numerous confidential memos attest to the need for security. One early memo from Lynch, written before filming began, compared the production to "steam in a giant boiler. It is already building up considerable pressure. Any leaks concerning what we are doing on this project will decrease the curiosity factor and cause us to lose power. I beg you to keep this in mind."

One area of speculation concerned how closely the film will follow Herbert's book. Judging by the draft of Lynch's script that we were able to obtain, the film should follow the novel quite faithfully. To be sure, the novel's complicated political intrigues have been refined and simplified, but the substance of the plot has been preserved, and the script makes surprisingly few concessions to the general public. Indeed, viewers not familiar with the book may have some difficulty following the flow of Lynch's screenplay. In the

beginning, for example, a Guild Navigator makes an allusion to the planet Ix—a name familiar to Herbert's readers, but one which might create a certain sense of confusion among the uninitiated. On the other hand, Lynch's script clarifies the mechanics of the plot against Duke Leo Atreides and his family. Jealous of the Duke's popularity, the Emperor is here seen—more clearly than in the novel—as the instigator of the conspiracy, with the Baron Harkonnen acting as his instrument.

The basic plot remains the same: the exile from Caladan, the arrival on Dune, the treason of Dr. Yueh, the Harkonnen's victory, Paul's adolescence with the Fremen, the final attack on Arrakeen—all are included. Certain scenes, however, have been left out, most likely due to time considerations. Fans, for instance, may regret the absence of the famous banquet scene that takes place shortly after the Atreides' arrival on Dune, during which Paul and his father engage in a verbal duel with some of Arrakis' notables. Also missing in the screenplay is a character dear to the hearts of *Dune's* fans: Count Hasimir Fenring, personal assassin of the Emperor and "kwizatz haderach" eunuch. Although it is true that Fenring is a minor character in the book, the final scene in which the Emperor demands that Fenring kill Paul, to which the Count refuses after sensing the almost fraternal bond that unites him to the young hero, is one of the most memorable in the book. However, the Bene Gesserit, Herbert's galactic sisterhood of Mendelian man-breeders, have been retained, and so has the Navigator's Guild, which is portrayed in the screenplay as the occult entity which manipulates both the Emperor and the events of the film.

Lynch's screenplay opens with the Emperor expecting, and dreading, the visit of a Third Stage Guild Navigator. The description of the Navigators and how they function is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding changes Lynch has introduced. In his script, Lynch divides the Guild into First, Second, and Third Stage Navigators. In an early scene, hundreds of Second Stage Navigators descend from a Guild ship. They are humanoids whose eyes are entirely blue (an effect caused by the absorption of spice, which gives longevity and precognitive abilities, enabling them to guide ships into hyper-space), dressed in spacesuits containing an orange spice-based gas, or “melange." They accompany a Third Stage Navigator to a secret

meeting with the Emperor, during which the deaths of the Atreides are sealed. The Third Stage Navigator is transported inside a huge black metal tank more than forty feet long and studded with valves and regulating instruments. Chemicals drip and spill from beneath it.

Guildsmen were not described in great detail in *Dune,* but one similar to Lynch's picture appeared in *Dune Messiah.* Obviously the product of mutations caused by life in a spice-filled atmosphere, the Third Stage Navigator bears little resemblance to a human being. In the script, he is described as "a cross between a pasty, pale human being and a fleshy grasshopper. The creature is over twenty feet long … His head is enormous, almost four feet high and very fleshy, like a huge grasshopper head. The eyes are totally blue. His voice is a high, fleshy whispering, and an intricate electrical apparatus in the front of the tank translates what he says into English and broadcasts it into the room."

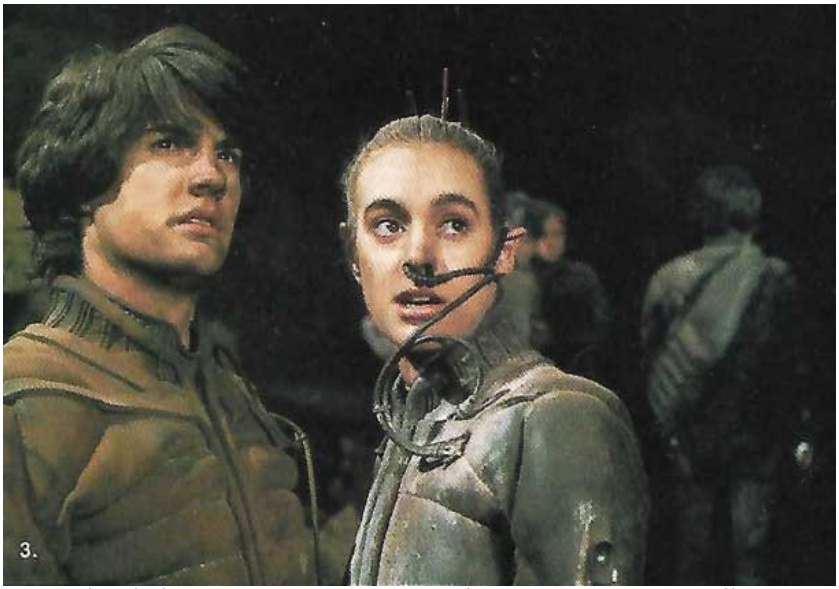
In a later scene, the Atreides fleet, composed of 3,415 spaceships, leaves Caladan to take possession of Arrakis. When one of the Guild's giant starships appears, the Atreides vessels enter its hold. The size of the Guilds ship defies comprehension; its hold already contains thousands of other space vessels en route to various points in the universe.

The scene then changes to the ship's two-thousand-foot-high control room. There, swimming in the spice-filled atmosphere, a Third Stage Navigator hovers around a six-dimensional, multi-layered replica of the entire universe. The Navigator manipulates the miniature universe with its hands, and the miniature elongates … Thus begins the voyage into hyperspace. (In an earlier version of the script, anticipating the mutation of Paul's son in *God-Emperor of Dune,* the existence of still another order of being—*Fourth* Stage Navigators—is hinted at. In the end, they are revealed to be giant, five-hundred-foot-long worms with pale, humanoid faces.)

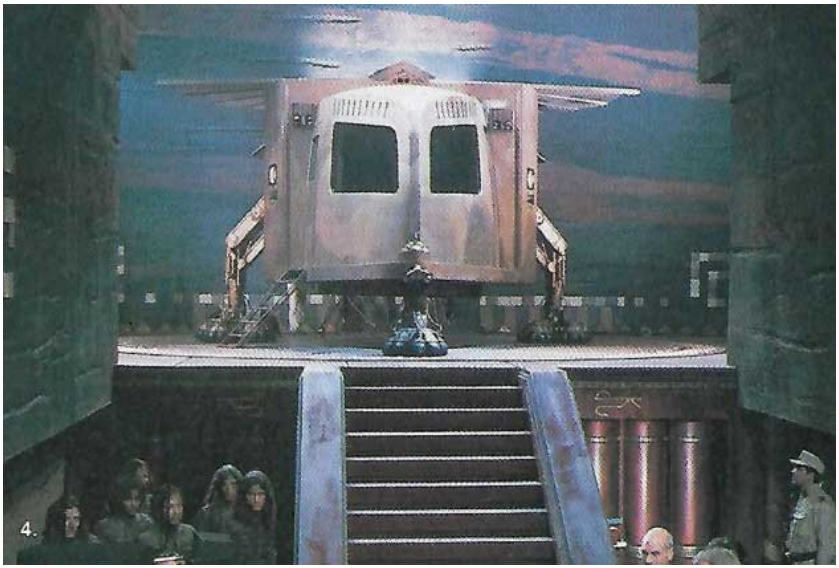
Lady Jessica (Francesca Annis) poses before the Great Staircase in Castle Caladan.

Lynch films author Frank Herbert (right, with clapboard), beginning *Dune's* first day of filming.

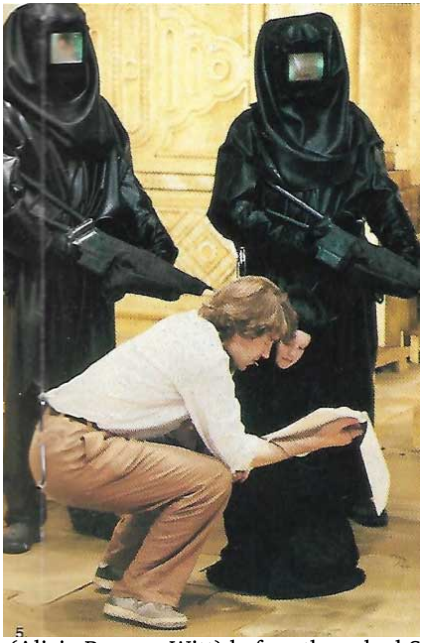
The evil Baron Harkonnen (Kenneth McMillan, right), airborne using anti-grav devices, and Piter (Brad Dourif) interrogate a prone Duke Leto (Jurgen Prochnow).



Paul and Chani (Sean Young), wearing their water-conserving stillsuits.



The film's helicopter-like ornithopter also relies on anti-grav devices.

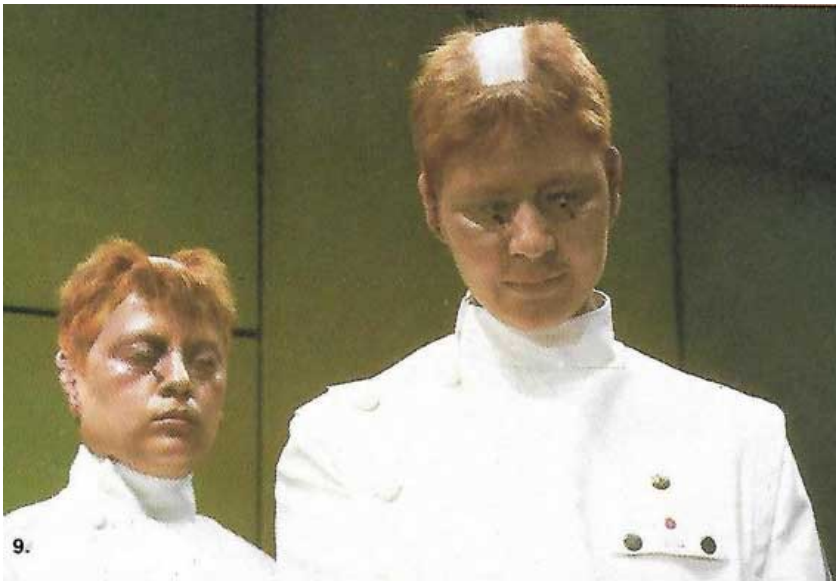


Lynch directs Alia (Alicia Roanne Witt) before the robed Sardaukar soldiers.

The Reverend Mother Mohiam (Sian Phillips) and Feyd.

Paul and Lady Jessica.

Thufir Hawat (Freddie Jones), the Atreides family's Mentat—human computer—and Paul's mentor.



The Baron's servants. Played by extras, they have their eyes and ears sewn shut.

The Shadout Mapes (Linda Hunt) brandishes her crysknife.

Piter (Brad Dourif) prepares to kill the traitor Dr. Yueh.

Lynch's interpretation of Herbert's universe may not be as radical as Jodorowsky's, but it is no less personal. For example, his description of Gedi Prime, the Harkonnen's planet, while undoubtedly impressive, cannot help but bring to mind some of the sordidness of

both *Eraserhead* and *The Elephant Man:* The shot begins “from high above, looking down on a black steel shuttle landing field in the middle of a vast sea of black oil. A small cable car zooms up toward us on an elevator of black steel. The car comes to a stop and is transferred to another cable, and it begins rocketing horizontally across the black oil lake. In the distance can be seen a gigantic black city in the shape of a rectangular box over one hundred stories high. Each level is lined with columns and passageways, but no doors. Before the city there are rows of gigantic black steel towering figures atop massive furnaces. The fixtures serve as chimneys, and black smoke billows out of their mouths."

In order to bring Lynch's vision to life, more than seventy-five sets had to be built on the eight sound stages of Churubusco Studios under the supervision of production designer Tony Masters *(Lawrence of Arabia*, 2001), and the largest blue screen ever constructed (35 feet high by 108 feet long) was employed for front projection. A special color code was conceived, both to avoid confusion and to better individualize each decor. For example, the throne room appears to have been constructed of gold and jade, and is decorated with superb mosaics mixing Roman, Aztec, Moorish, and Venetian styles. The decors of the planet Dune itself were done predominantly in black, tan, and red. Dune's inhabitants, the nomadic Fremen, live in immense subterranean caverns that have been carved from rock by means of lasers. The idyllic ambiance of the Atreides' Caladan is a palace with walls of beautifully polished wood. The Baron's oily black world shows the influence of Victorian architecture and was created with forged metal.

Dune's exteriors were filmed in and around Mexico City. The parking lot of the Azteca Stadium served as a landing field; a 100-by-300 foot reservoir (for the Fremen's secret water reserves) was built in a hangar in Iztapalapa; a lava wall, 65 feet high, was erected at Las Aguilas Rojas. As for the numerous scenes representing the surface of Dune itself, these were shot in the Samalayuca Desert near Juarez. In order to make the desert resemble as close as possible the barren, lifeless Dune, it was completely cleared of all traces of plants and other organic matter before each take.

The enormous number of special effects required by Lynch's script were another problem; at one point, for example, it called for the landing on Dune of all 3,415 Atreides vessels in rows of fifty! Working with all the effects technology was a trying experience, says Lynch, "but in every shot of *Eraserhead* there was all sorts of rigging, even though it was on a small scale. And on *The Elephant Man* there were things that didn't seem like effects, but were. You get used to these things—and with *Dune,* there were just way, way *more* of them! We had every kind of technique going, and a totally international crew—blue-screen guys from here and from England, model-makers from here, England, Italy, and Spain. Everything was storyboarded, everything was broken down so people knew what they had to do. What you really learn is that whatever you can think of, you can do. There's a way to do it. It's just a matter of having good people that can pull it off."

Have they pulled it off? We won't know till *Dune* opens in December. One thing we do know, however, is that the many people who worked on this film have put more than just their time into it; they've put a bit of themselves as well.

Waldenbooks Interviews Frank Herbert and David Lynch

Waldenbooks interview of Frank Herbert and David Lynch before the December, 1984, release of DUNE.

> *We do nasty things to our leaders. We shoot them on the streets of Dallas and hang them on pieces of wood at Golgatha. We fondly say that in the United States we separate church and state. That's an asinine statement. I am a political analyst, and I've really never left journalism. I'm writing about the current scene. The metaphors are there. I'm writing about the political ecology, the religious ecology, the social ecology, and the physical ecology of our world. And I think you do not separate any one part of this from the other. You don't separate the mind and body and understand the human being.*

Interviewer: Waldenbooks is proud to have the opportunity to speak with author Frank Herbert and director David Lynch. David Lynch is not only the director of Dune the motion picture but also the author of the screenplay. Right beside me is Frank Herbert, the author of the book, and, of course, all of the subsequent books which have become so immensely popular. The first question I wanted to ask is of the film-maker. Did you feel threatened by the fact that so many readers had seen Dune so many times before they'll have the opportunity to come into the theater to see your Dune?

Lynch: You've got to be either stupid or crazy, you know, to do something like this, and I live in fear 24 hours a day.

Interviewer: So you're definitely cognizant of the stature?

Lynch: Yes.

Herbert: Why don't me the question because I've seen the film.

Lynch: Somebody has to do it, right? And someone had to do it, and I was…. the day I finished reading the book, I met with Dino in his office, and I was so high from finishing the book, and so thrilled with, you know, what I had read, I signed on. And I didn't really know that it was going to be 3 and a half of this type of year, but I'll let Frank tell you what he thinks.

Interviewer: Dino DiLaurentiis came to you or brought you to Dune the project before you were even fully aware…. ?

Lynch: I had never read… never even heard the word.

Herbert: He thought it was June.

Lynch: I thought he said June.

Interviewer: I do want Frank the question about the film, what he thinks of it. And that is kind of a loaded question because Frank is a film-maker himself, something I didn't know until today. So you're not working with someone…

Herbert: Documentaries. Different things.

Interviewer: But, you're aware of the process, of the visual medium, and you're happy with the film.

Herbert: Well, I get asked the specific question a lot of times. If the settings, the scenes, that I saw in David's film match my original imagination, the things that I projected in my imagination. I must tell you that some of them do precisely, some of them don't, and some of them are better, which is what you would expect of artists such as David and Tony Masters. I'm delighted with that. I mean, why not take it and improve on it visually? As far as I'm concerned the film is a visual feast. I would love to have some of the scenes as stills to frame and have around me. They're beautiful.

Interviewer: So you feel there was a synergy between the two of you: the director/screen-writer and the creator of the concept?

Herbert: Synergy? You mean the sum is more than the parts?

Interviewer: That's right. That something better came out of the

two of you working together?

Herbert: I think so.

Interviewer: What was Frank's participation? I am asking David this question.

Lynch: I signed on to do Dune. I always… when I was working on the Elephant Man, I worked with Christopher Dvorn and Eric Bergman, and we tried to be true to the essence of, you know, the elephant man. And in Dune, I try to be true to the essence of Frank's, you know, book, which is not an easy thing because there are so many different lines and so many different things swimming about. It's picking and choosing and condensing and, you know, all sorts of things. So Frank's contribution was, you know, the book and his support from day one all the way through to now. He's always available, you know, for questions, and he's read almost every, you know, draft of the …. I did seven drafts. And, he's, you know, allowed me, you know, to do my thing, and his book is packed full with, you know, these, what I call, seed ideas. There's the big ideas, but there's so many little seed ideas, and those he let me, you know, sprout and run with. That was the thrill for me because there are things in the movie that were sparked by Frank, but they were allowed, you know, to grow out. I think it'll be neat for people who have read the book, they'll see a difference, but it is true to the essence of Frank's ideas.

Herbert: The film begins as the book begins, and it ends essentially as the book ends. And I hear my dialog all the way through it, not just my dialog, but there's lots of other dialog. I had the funny sensation of watching the rough cut, not exactly too rough recently, of some of the cuts, the things that are not in there, of feeling that they'd happened just off stage or that we'd gone beyond them, but they'd happened, that we hadn't really lost them. There are only two scenes that I missed in the film, but I know why they were cut. They were pets of mine, and you shouldn't have any pets.

Lynch: No, they were pets of mine, too, but I know which scenes they are. Those are the things… that's the trouble. The film right now is 2 hours and 20 minutes, and it rolls along gangbusters. But certain scenes that Frank and I both liked, I think would have, you

know, stopped the film.

Interviewer: Was this merely a stroke of luck that two artists from two different mediums, obviously two sensitive artists, didn't really experience any substantial difficulty in molding or contributing to the production of this film?

Lynch: On my part I consider it pretty lucky, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you expect the license that Frank gave you?

Lynch: I met Frank, you know, three and a half years ago when I first signed on. I didn't know who or what I was going to be meeting. I had seen his picture, this bearded, you know, guy on his books, right?

Herbert: Guru author.

Lynch: Yeah, so, but it's turned out to be like… well Frank is an idea man. They're the best kind of people in my book around. Ideas are…. everybody, you know, feeds of them, but, you know, very few people can catch them. They're out there, but they're so elusive. You have to, you know, be kind of sneaky and sneak up on them and capture them. Frank captures these, you know, fantastic ideas, and I really, you know, respect that.

Interviewer: Frank, you are obviously satisfied with the result.

Herbert: Yes, very much so. But the funny thing happened. Dino called me. I didn't know David from Adam's offer. And he called me and he said that he had hired David Lynch to do the…. to direct the film of Dune. This was after a couple of… well I think they would have been disasters. David knows why. So, I said: "David who?" and he said David Lynch. He said Elephant Man. So I went out and got a tape of it and played it on my video, and I had a funny gut sensation we had the guy who could do it. When you're doing a film from the written word, you're translating into a different language. It is as though you were translating from English to Swahili. The visual language is a different language, and there was such subtlety and such beauty in the Elephant Man. I've seen it about eight times, I think, and I get something new from it each time, something

peripheral or something right in the mainstream that was done visually as a visual metaphor. I've never told David this, but this is true. This is what happened to me. I had this gut sensation we've got him, you know, the guy who can do it.

Interviewer: I'm glad we're having this talk. David, did you as a film-maker… I think by anyone's estimation Dune was written very visually as a piece of literature, visual description, visualization of that is very immediate. Did that help you in your translation to the screen?

Lynch: Well, like I said, I really in a way forget a lot of the book now because there have been so many drafts of the screenplay in between, but some things I really think, in you mind, you think that Frank described things. But when you go searching, some things are described of course, but some things are left to your imagination, even in the book. And, um…

Herbert: That was deliberate I might add.

Lynch: And you get a feeling, and your mind takes over from there. A lot of times, you go searching for descriptions of things, they weren't there or I realized that I was picturing something and I was falling in love with what I was picturing. Frank allowed me to go with my interpretation in how things looked, and because of that I was able to…. my interpretation is one thing. And then I started working with Tony and we went through two or three different steps into sort of the stratosphere of interpretation and we got clicking on four really nifty different worlds and the look of each one.

Interviewer: So, the motion picture is truly an entity unto itself. If you love the book, you'll love the movie picture even more because it takes on a new dimension.

Lynch: I can see how everyone who reads the book is going to interpret it, and their interpretation is not mine, but I have to …. it has to go through me as the director like a filter, and things pass through me and it's not going to be other people's interpretation. Some people may love it, and some people say it's not what they pictured and they would be disappointed. You know, that's the way

it is.

Interviewer: Again, the book being so visual, some people… anyone who has read has been there before.

Lynch: Exactly.

Interviewer: What about the tools that you had to employ as a film-maker, especially a modern film-maker in this day and age? What did you do?

Lynch: Every technique known to film-making has been used on this picture, except for stop-motion, strangely enough. And, so, I've learned a tremendous amount of technical things. We built over about 80 sets in what amounted to 16 sound stages down in Mexico, travelled all over the world, Rafaella and I, Rafaella is the producer, first looking for locations and finally going to Mexico. I've seen actors for this picture all over the world. And people in this film are from all over the world. At one point there was 1,700 people on the crew, and that's a huge amount of people. And sometimes I'd turned around on the set, and there would be 600 people, and they are not extras, you know, crew people, or visitors, or camera crews, or whatever, you know, on the set, so it has been a strange experience, but a huge, fantastic experience.

Herbert: I want to add a little bit to this. A strange thing happened at the wrap party down in Mexico. At least a dozen of the actors and actresses who were in it came up to me and said, individually, more or less the same thing: that they were sorry it was over. They had such a good time.

Interviewer: So it wasn't necessarily a gruelling experience that drove everyone insane?

Lynch: No, we were really together. It was a great experience. And we were in a foreign world, and we were, you know, in Mexico City, which is…. I will always feel is the perfect place to make Dune because Dune is a foreign world and for foreign worlds. And if I was making it in Arizona, it would be too normal. Mexico City was just the right atmosphere, the right mood to kind of let your…. just it was help your mind get out there, you know, and to…. Dune.

Herbert: There was a certain kind of rapport between the producer and the director. We had our disagreements, but they weren't major disagreements, they weren't shouting disagreements or anything like that. If you could explain your point, people listened to you. The only time I objected to something that was going to be done, David and Rafaella and everybody else listened to me and they didn't do the thing I didn't want done.

Lynch: I can't remember what it was.

Herbert: You weren't going to kill off…

Lynch: Oh yes that's right. Yes, yeah.

Herbert: That's the only thing I ever objected to.

Interviewer: Did they kill them off then?

Herbert: No, yeah, they did.

Lynch: But in the proper way.

Herbert: In the proper way, yeah.

Interviewer: So we'll see that when we go to the motion picture?

Herbert: You'll see an authentic scene that is from the book, very poignant.

Interviewer: Who's going to be killed?

Herbert: Let's don't tell them.

Interviewer: So there are two more Dune projects, potential Dune projects already in the works?

Lynch: In the works. I have started writing on the script to Dune II. It needs a lot more work, and then I'll show it to Frank, and I'll see what he thinks.

Interviewer: You'll be a tough audience then?

Herbert: Tougher than hell.

Interviewer: Now, it is interesting that Frank didn't do the screenplays for Dune. Why did that happen.

Herbert: Well, I did a screenplay, and it was awful.

Lynch: I never read Frank's script. I don't believe it was awful.

Herbert: It was too long. It lacked the proper visual metaphors. I was too close to the book to be able to see it as a film. David didn't have that problem. Working on this film with David has taught me a great deal about taking the printed word, a screenplay and making it into a film. Now I feel confident to do a screenplay. I don't know if I can do a screenplay of one of my own books. Well, yes, I can. I'm doing it.

Interviewer: So you have definitely learned from each other in this experience a great deal?

Herbert: I would say so, yeah.

Lynch: Mmmhmm.

Interviewer: And that would make the next two pictures something that you would look forward to?

Lynch: Oh yeah, I look forward to it, you know… I'm a little bit, well we all are. I'm a little bit Duned out right now.

Herbert: Dune-in we say.

Interviewer: Three and a half years you've been on this project.

Lynch: That's right. Three and a half years.

Interviewer: That's a long time. But the results are, from what everyone says, well worth the effort. What, and that leads me to the last question I want to ask David as a film-maker… have you thought of how the public is going to respond to this? In other words, as you made the film, have you had a place in your mind where you've been contemplating what the response will be? How people will react to what you are doing?

Lynch: Well, I've thought about…. a lot about the films I've loved, and what it was. It wasn't…. It was an experience that I had while watching them that I couldn't get anywhere else. I never got it anywhere else. Ever. And I would so gladly pay my five dollars to have that experience. And it took me… the films that I loved took me to another place, even if it was twenty years ago or present day, but another place, and gave me an experience, and I think that is what I hope Dune will do. And it is four different worlds and a trip through them that you can't experience anywhere else. Ever.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, David, for sharing your thoughts and background on the film with Waldenbooks.

Lynch: Thanks a million.

Different Worlds Interview, 1985

Different Worlds, 1985

After twenty-two rejections from most of the major publishing houses, Frank Herbert finally found someone with faith in the first chapter of his magnum opus *at the Chilton Book Company. That was twenty-five years and 13 million sales ago.*

After winning every major award the science-fiction field has to offer, it only took ten years for someone to option the rights to make a film. Fifteen years after that first option, a motion picture version of the novel voted the "Best Science-Fiction Novel Ever Written" has been released. It may not be the best science-fiction film ever made, but it is near the top of the heap.

Dune*, the film, is a major accomplishment for the modern cinema. It is nearly unbelievable that such a staggering beautiful and powerful film could have been produced at this time, given the state of of the science-fiction film these days, but it was, and most everyone connected with the production is pleased as can be.*

Rather than go on at length over the film's merits, however, this issue we decided to leave that to someone else. We were able to meet author Frank Herbert for an hour during which he discussed both his novel, and the breathtaking bit of wonder which has been produced from it.

Q: I know you feel David Lynch really pulled the film together beautifully. Is there anything special about his background that you feel made him exceptionally perfect for *Dune*?

A: You know David was an oil painter; he comes into movies from a strange direction. People ask me if the sets match my original vision of it all, and to be truthful I have to say some do, and some don't, and some are better.

Q: None worse?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Then he's matched or topped your own interpretations throughout?

A: Yes, as far as the visuals are concerned. But what would you expect with Tony Masters as the art director, for Gods sake? He didn't win the Oscars sitting home twiddling his thumbs.

Q: What was his best achievement—what did the bring to the screen so perfectly you just couldn't believe it?

A: The Great Hall. It was absolutely beautiful. I just stood there and said, "boy." And the castle at Caladan was magnificent. It was a real metaphor for the feudal society I had postulated.

Q: And the creatures and the costumes, how does it all come across?

A: Oh, God, the costumes are eye-sockers! They did a great job with all the artifacts; they really did. They want all out for everything. At the wrap party, a lot of the actors and actresses and technical people kept coming up to me to tell me how sorry they were it was over.

Q: Well, you do seem happy about the way things went.

A: I am absolutely delighted. I'd heard so many horror stories about books being butchered by being made into a film, and had science-fiction films coming from De Laurentiis, but this is not one. All the characters of *Dune* are in it—it's not a comic book for the screen at all.

Q: The performers are responsible for the character development to a large part. Was there anyone who did such a remarkable job they brought tears to your eyes?

A: I thought Freddie Jones in the Thurfir Hawat part really did a super job. And (Kenneth) McMillan as the Baron is absolutely hideous. You hate him.

Q: You're supposed to.

A: Yes, yes. And the same with Sting. He wasn't a pretty face with

naught behind it—he was everything Feyd is supposed to be. Francesca Annis was also a surprise to me. When I met her at the first night I was in Mexico City (where most of the principal photography for the movie was shot), and I looked at this beautiful woman and thought, "My God, she's Jessica!" there was no doubt about it. Now I thought Kyle MacLachlan did a bang-up job as Paul; he wasn't the way I had visualized Paul, but the spirit and the intensity are there—he plays the part. He dominates the screen when he's on it.

Q: Which is helpful, considering that this is Paul's story. Which makes it a good time to ask you what that story is. Where did *Dune* come from? How did you decide to write such a book? Where did all the background com from? Start anywhere you like.

A: I was going to do a story an the messianic impulse in human society. Why do we follow charismatic leaders? I had a small insight once, that charismatic leaders are dangerous, and that we should question them because they are just people and can make mistakes. But the mistakes of the human being as leader are amplified by those who follow him without question. So I decided I would explore this propensity human beings have to do things like go to Jonestown and drink Kool-Aid. You get a mad leader, and that madness is actually contagious. People follow such people and I could see there was a story in there, so I started doing my research. Comparative religions, anthropology, you name it.

Now at the same time, I went down to a Department of Agriculture experimental station on the coast of Oregon to do a newspaper story on their work. They had been extremely successful in developing ways to control the movement of sand dunes. In fact, successful to the point that there were delegations from all over the world to learn from us. I look at this; I flow over it, took photographs form the air, and it got me interested in how we inflict ourselves on this planet. And then, about a year later, I woke up to the fact that I had a perfect setting for the story I wanted to tell. A planet which as entirely dunes, entirely desert. So I finally started to concentrate on the kinds of research I was doing. Desert ecology, geology, the flora and fauna of same, and then, I went down to the Sonora Desert and lived for a while so I could experience it all first hand.

Q: How long ‘a while’?

A: About three month.

Q: Are we talking about driving out from the hotel every day and kicking around?

A: No. We are talking about renting a place out in the desert, off of a dirt road. Living with the roadrunners and the rattlesnakes and all the rest around you. There’s a lot of life in the desert.

Q: So, after all that, were you ready to start writing?

A: No, not really. I hadn’t finished loading the system, as I call it, getting together all the information I would need to give me that sense of verisimilitude of what it would really be like to live in a place where water was so precious that people did not cry, that the body was salvaged for its water after death, and so on. So I went back to the drawing board, and took some more books out of the library, and I also developed a system of going to the experts. Being a fairly good interviewer, I would go knocking on professors’ doors and say, “Hey, you know something I’d like to know. I can do something for both of us; I’ll get an article out of you, which will be published,” which is all professors need, “and I’ll get the information I need.” We would knock out articles in a week most of them swear they couldn't have written in three months. And they got published and I got what I needed.

Q: So, then…

A: Then, I sat down, and started to write. And a year and a half later, I had a book.

Q: How long before the public had the same book?

A: A long time. It was turned down twenty-two times.

Q: Twenty-two times, eh?

A: That’s right.

Q: We’ll leave the implications of that one alone for now and try to

concentrate on the story itself, and not on the story behind it. When did you decide you hadn't told everything there was to tell and start on *Dune Messiah*?

A: Well, the three books were always one story in my head. I had written parts of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* before *Dune* was finished. Mostly because I knew where it was going, so I just went there.

Q: Did you plan the others that followed then?

A: No, I planned three books—to do a *rondelet*, to invert, because I was talking about the messianic impulse; that was the thrust of the original idea. So I wanted the create a very charismatic leader, who became a messiah, and you would follow the leader for the proper reasons, he was a great guy, you see. But then the power structure occurs; the theory about absolute power corrupting absolutely, I don't think that really nails it. I don't think that power always corrupts, but I do think that power attracts the corruptible. And so, when you get a power structure, you get a lot of people into it.

So I had the idea of taking this messiah, building the power structure around him, having the central book invert the whole picture of the charismatic leader. Then the third book gets to show the aftermath of it all.

Q: And that takes us far ahead of ourselves. After all, the film is only from the first book.

A: Correct. And not every scene of it is in the movie. You wouldn't sit for a fourteen-hour butt-killing epic, would you?

Q: The way this one looks, maybe four hours, but no, not fourteen. Of course, the director has said people should go and read the book before they see the film. Would you agree?

A: I would. Now, I'm pretty close to the book, but I had the weird experience of seeing the film, and having the sense that some of the scenes that were left out merely happen off stage.

Q: So you don't feel anything was missed?

A: Well, there was only one scene I would have liked that they did not include. The banquet scene. I understand the necessities of it—it did not fit the continuity of the script they had written, and it would have cost a lot of money, but David, in the final proof has done a magnificent job. The film begins as *Dune* begins, and it ends as *Dune* ends, and I hear my dialogue all the way through it.

Q: With so much missing, though, do you feel that maybe the film's major concentration is on the book's violence, and the sandworms, rather than on the core of the story as you described it earlier?

A: Oh, those things are there, and they really look marvelous, they really do—but the feel is for the politics and the people. David has a way—as he had in the *Elephant Man*—of giving you the feel of the situation, the attitudes of a people and an environment, without going into a lot of detail.

Q: So, the short of it is that we both agree. *Dune* the film is great, and you are very personally pleased with the way everything has turned out.

A: Simple answer: yes.

Q: Then I'll wrap up with a whimsical question: if you could have stepped in front of the camera without feeling you'd be recognized, hiding out in the background somewhere, what scene would you have wanted to be in?

A: In the finale, in the confrontation scene between Feyd-Rautha and Paul. Just as one of, oh, the Fremen in the background.

Q: Well, it's a shame you didn't. I think you could have gotten away with it. People have been a little to caught up in the things to be watching for faces.

A: I hope so. Everything has gone just perfectly, as someone was up there watching over me. Before the whole project, I'd heard so many horror stories, but I went into it all with the feeling there had to be an exception to all the tales of woe sooner or later. I'm just delighted that *Dune* got to be the exception.

Alejandro Jodorowsky: Dune, the film you will never see

translated from *Métal Hurlant* 107, 1985

There is a Hebraic legend which says: “the Messiah will not be a man but one day: the day when all the human beings will be illuminated.” Kabbalistes speak about a conscience collective, cosmic, a species of méta-Universe. And here are what for me all the *Dune* project was.

ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION

To show the process of illumination of a hero, then a people, then a whole planet (which in its turn is the Messiah of the Universe since by giving up its orbit, the holy planet leaves to spread its light throughout all the galaxies)…

I did not want to respect the novel, I wanted to recreate it. For me *Dune* did not belong to Herbert as *Don Quixote* did not belong to Cervantes, nor *Oedipus* with Aeschylus.

There is an artist, only one in the medium of a million other artists, which only once in his life, by a species of divine grace, receives an immortal topic, a MYTH… I say "receives" and not "creates" because the works of art its received in a state of mediumnity directly of the unconscious collective. Work exceeds the artist and to some extent, it kills it because humanity, by receiving the impact of the Myth, has a major need to erase the individual who received it and transmitted: its individual personality obstructs, stains the purity of the message which, of its base, requires to be anonymous… We know whom created the cathedral of Notre-Dame, neither the Aztec solar calendar, neither the tarot of Marseilles, nor the myth of Don Juan, etc.

One feels that Cervantes gave HIS version of Quixote—of course incomplete—and that we carry in the heart the total character… Christ belongs not to Mark, neither to Luke, neither to Matthew, nor to John… There are many other Gospels known as apocryphal books and there is as many lifes of Christ as there are believers. Each one of us has their own version of *Dune*, its Jessica, their Paul… I felt in enthusiastic admiration towards Herbert and at the same time in conflict (I think that the same thing occurred to him) … He obstructed me… I did not want him as a technical adviser… I did everything to move him away from the project… I had received a version of *Dune* and I wanted to transmit it: the Myth was to give up the literary form and to become Image…

In film, the Duke Leto (father of Paul) would be a man castrated in a ritual combat in the arenas during a bullfight (emblem of the Atreides house being a crowned bull…) Jessica—nun of the Bene Gesserit -, sent as concubine at the Duke to create a girl which would be the mother of a Messiah, becomes so in love with Leto that she decides to jump a chain link and to create a son, Kwisatz Haderach, the saviour. By using her capacities of Bene Gesserit—once that the Duke, insanely in love with her, entrusts her with his sad secret—Jessica is inseminated by a drop of blood of this sterile man… The camera followed (in script) the red drop through the ovaries of the woman and sees its meeting with the ovule where, by a miraculous explosion, it fertilizes it. Paul had been born from a virgin; and not of the sperm of his father but of his blood…

INSANE EMPEROR

In my version of *Dune*, the Emperor of the galaxy is insane. He lives on an artificial gold planet, in a gold palace built according to not-laws of antilogical. He lives in symbiosis with a robot identical to him. The resemblance is so perfect that the citizens never know if they are facing the man or the machine…

In my version, the spice is a blue drug with spongy consistency filled with a vegetable-animal life endowed with consciousness, the highest level of consciousness. It does not stop taking all kinds of forms, while stirring up unceasingly. The spice continuously produces the creation of the innumerable universes.

The Baron Harkonnen is an immense man of 300 kilograms. he is so fat and heavy that, to move, he must make continuous use of antigravitational bubbles attached at his limbs… His delusion of grandeur does not have limits: he lives in a palace built like a portrait of itself… This immense sculpture is drawn up on a sordid and marshy planet… To enter the palace, one must wait until the colossus opens the mouth and draws a tongue from steel (landing strip…).

At the end of film, the wife of the Count Fenring leaps towards Paul, who has already become Fremen, and she slices his throat. Paul while dying says: “Too late, one cannot kill me… because…

…because, Jessica with the voice of Paul continues, to kill the Kwisatz Haderach, you would have to also have killed me…” And each Fremen, each Atreides speaks now with the voice of Paul: “I am the collective man. He who shows the way.”

Reality changes quickly. Three columns of light spout out of the planet. They mix. Plunge in the sand of planet: “I am the Earth which awaits the seed!” the spice is desiccated. The ground trembles. Water drops form a pillar surrounded by fire.

Silver filaments emerge from spice. Create a rainbow. They form in a water cloud, produce a red “lava”. Then vapor. Clouds. Rain. Rivers. Grass. Forests. Dune becomes green. A blue ring surrounds planet now. It is divided. It produces more and more rings. Dune is

now a world illuminated, which crosses the galaxy, which leaves it, which gives it light—which is Consciousness—to all the universe.

TRUTHS ALCHEMISTS

To conceive this final sequence of transmutation of the matter, I was likely to come into contact with true alchemists… Mysterious beings (one of them seemed to be more than one hundred of years, advanced age which however enabled him to move with an energy of young teenager) which approached me because *Dune* could be a philosopher stone, the stone which changes into gold all other metals… In this sequence, they described what really occurs when they manage to transform, in their alchemical furnaces, the matter…

For the "guerrilla" war that Paul and Fremen carries out against the imperial army, I had been lucky to contact a guerrilla expert from South America… He had fought in Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Center-America… His invaluable experience brought to the scenario a martial reality…

When Jessica becomes the supreme Mother of the Fremen, and must pass through ceremonies of initiation, learn medicine from the wizards and contact other dimensions of reality, I knew the magic medicine of gypsies through Paul Derlon, already deceased… And the ceremonial of the mushrooms hallucinogens and miraculous operations by the Pachita witch, a being who had much more capacities than so-called Filipinos surgeons.

My son Brontis, who was to play Paul, was initiated at nine years of age by a legendary bodyguard—Jean-Pierre Vigneau—to the combat with the knife (of real engagements), karate, the art of archery… He received lessons from an almost true mentat—Michel de Roisin—who had an encyclopaedic brain… I remember to have seen him give to Brontis a lesson on the fable the Cicada and the Ant which lasted more than fifteen days… Through the verses, he described a whole time and its civilizations.

With the production, I crossed the Sahara. I wanted to film *Dune* in Tassili, while facing with the actors, the thousands of extra and the technical teams, torrid heats and the dryness to obtain true lunar

landscapes… The Algerian government was very interested by the project…

Once, the Divinity agreed to say to me in a lucid dream: “Your next film must be *Dune*.” I had not read the novel. I lifted myself to a height of six o'clock in the morning and as an alcoholic who awaits the opening of the bar, I waited until someone opens the bookshop to buy the book. I read it of a feature without me stopping for drinking or eating. At midnight exactly, the very same day, I finish the reading. At one minute pass midnight I called from New York, Michel Seydoux in Paris… He would be the first of the seven samurai that it was necessary for me to have for the immense project. Michel was for me a young man (26 years) without experience in the cinema, but his company Camera One had bought the rights for the Holy Mountain, my last film and had distributed very well it… He had said to me: “I will want to produce a film with you”. I did not know much about him but by an intuition which today surprises me, by seeing it, in spite of his youth, I see in him the largest producer of the time… Why? Mystery… And I was not mistaken. When I say to him that I wanted that he buys the rights for *Dune* and that the film should be international because it would exceed the ten million dollars (fabulous sum for the time: even Hollywood did not believe in science fiction films, *2001* would be unique and unpassable), he did not stumble: “OK. We'll be in Los Angeles in two days to buy the rights.”

He had not read the book… I think that he did not read it yet because the prose of Herbert annoyed him… And one could buy the rights—easily because Hollywood found the book unrealizable with the screen and noncommercial… Michel Seydoux gave me unlimited power and an enormous financial support: I could create my team without economic problem.

3,000 DRAWINGS

I needed a precise script… I wanted to carry out film on paper before filming it… These days all films with special effect are done as that, but at the time this technique was not used. I wanted a draughtsman of comic strips who has the genius and the speed, who can be used as me as a camera and who gives at the same time a visual style… I was by chance with my second warrior: Jean Giraud

alias Moebius (at the time he had not made Arzach, nor The Airtight Garage). I say to him: “If you accept this work, you must all give up and leave tomorrow with me to Los Angeles to speak with Douglas Trumbull (*2001: A Space Odyssey*)”. Moebius asked for a few hours of think about it.

The following day, we left for the United States. It would take too a long time to tell… Our collaboration, our meetings in America with the strange ones illuminated and our conversations at seven o'clock in the morning in the small cafe which was in bottom of our workshops and which by “chance” was called Café the Universe. Giraud made 3,000 drawings, all marvelous… The script of *Dune*, thanks to his talent, is a masterpiece. One can see living the characters, one follows the movements of camera. One visualizes cutting, the decorations, the costumes… All that with, each time, some features of pencil… I was behind his shoulders by asking him for the various points of view… By putting in scene the “actors”, etc. One filmed…

For the third warrior I required a clever dreamer who can draw the space ships in different way than that of American films:

“I do not want that the man conquers space

In the ships of NASA

These concentration camps of the spirit

These gigantic freezers vomiting the imperialism

These slaughters of plundering and plunder

This arrogance of bronze and thirst

This eunuchoid science

Not the dribble of transistorised and riveted hulks

The divine one

The delirious one

The superb one

CHAOS

UNIVERSAL

I want magical entities, vibrating vehicles

To prolong to be to it abyss

Like fish of a timeless ocean. I want

Jewels, mechanics as perfect as the heart

Womb-ships anterooms

Rebirth into other dimensions

I want whore-ships driven

By the sperm of passionate ejaculations

In an engine of flesh

I want rockets complex and secret,

Humming-bird ornithopters,

Sipping the thousand-year-old nectar of dwarf stars…"

This is why I wrote to Christopher Foss, an English draughtsman who illustrated covers of science fiction books… Like Giraud, he had never thought of the cinema… With a great enthusiasm, he left London and settled in Paris… This artist, with the ships which he produced for *Dune*, marked the cinema. He could produce semi-alive machines which could be metamorphosed with the color of the stones of space… He could produce "thirsty battleships dying century after century in a star desert awaiting the alive body which will fill their empty tanks of subtle secretions of its heart…"

METAPHYSICAL HORROR

After I found Giger, a Swiss painter whose catalogue Dalí had

shown me… His art declining, sick, suicidal, brilliant, was perfect to carry out the Harkonnen planet… He made a project of castle and planet which really touched with the metaphysical horror. (Later, he carried out the sets and the monster of *Alien*.)

For the special effects, thanks to the capacity which Michel Seydoux gave me, I was able to refuse Douglas Trumbull… I was unable to swallow his vanity, his airs of business leader and his exorbitant prices. Like a good American, he played to scorn the project and tried to complex us while making us wait while speaking with us at the same time as with ten people on the telephone and finally by showing us superb machines which he tried to improve. Tired of all this comedy, I left to research a young talent. It is said to me that in L.A. it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. I saw in a modest festival of cinema by science fiction amateurs, a film made without means that I found marvelous: *Dark Star*.

I contacted the boy who had made the special effects: Dan O' Bannon. I was almost with a wolf child. Completely out of conventional reality, O'Bannon was for me a real genius. He could not believe that I can entrust a project as significant as *Dune* to him. He was obliged to believe it when he received his plane ticket for Paris. I was not mistaken: Dan O'Bannon wrote later the scenario of *Alien* and a good number of other films with great success.

With Jean-Paul Gibon, who was the executive producer of Camera-One and who liked the project as much as us, we left for England to seek the musician. A vital aspect for me: each planet had its style of music, for example a group as Magma could carry out very well the warlike rates/rhythms of Harkonnens which would be able to crystallize the beauty of planet of sands with its mystery and its relentless forces, the strange symphony of the rings of the giant worms.

Virgin Records accepted us and offered Gong, Mike Oldfield and Tangerine Dream to us. At this time, I say: “And why not Pink Floyd?” The group at that time had such success that almost all regarded that as an unrealizable idea. I had the chance, thanks to my film *El Topo*, known by these musicians. They happily agreed to receive us in London with the *Abbey Road* studios where Beatles had recorded their success. Jean-Paul Gibon was very agreeably

surprised that the group would see us. Me, at that time, I had already almost lost my individual conscience. I was the instrument of a miraculous work, where all could be done. *Dune* was not with my service, I were, as the samurai that I had found, with the service of the work. They were recording *Dark Side of the Moon*. While arriving, I did not see a group of large musicians realizing its masterpiece, I see four young people guys devouring steak and chips. Jean-Paul and me, standing in front of them, were to wait until their voracity is satisfied.

In the name of *Dune* I was taken of a holy anger and I left while slamming the door. I wanted artists who can respect a work of such an importance for the human conscience. I think that they did not expect that. Surprised, David Gilmour ran behind us by giving excuses and made us attend the last mixing of its disc. Which ecstasy!… After one attended their last public concert where thousands of fanatics acclaimed them. They wanted to see *The Holy Mountain*. They saw it in Canada. They decided to take part in film by producing an album which was going to be called *Dune* made up of two discs. They came to Paris to discuss the economic part and, after an intense discussion, one arrived at an agreement. Pink Floyd would make almost all the music of film.

100,000 DOLLARS AN HOUR

With the best music on our side, I started to seek the actors. I had seen Charlotte Rampling in Zardoz. I wanted her for Jessica. She refused the role. She wanted at that time to make two or three commercial films, the love of life interesting her more than art. David Carradine came to Paris, interested by the role of Leto.

The actor that I wished for most was Dalí: for the role of the insane Emperor… Which adventure!… The Emperor buffoon, seemed to me it, could be played only by one man of the great delirious personality of Dalí. To New York, with Michel Seydoux and Jean-Paul Gibon, I arrived at our hotel, San Régis and in the hall I see sitted El Salvador Dalí. I guess that it is indelicate to approach him immediately and the following day I called him by telephone. I speak Spanish. Dalí had not see my films but friends spoke to him about them with enthusiasm. He invites me to a very private surrealist exposure and promises to leave me the invitation under

the door.

At six o'clock in the evening, I found the invitation for two people. Dalí said to me to be there to 7 O'clock exactly. I arrive with Michel Seydoux five minutes late. At seven hours five, Dalí is not there any more. He came, he got out of its car, made a one minute circuit in the room then left.

A taxi is travelled by and when arriving at the hotel, by chance, I am with Dalí again in the hall. I take an appointment for the following day in the bar of the hotel and I leave.

This night, I chooses to dine at a French restaurant and by chance I find a few steps from of our table is El Salvador Dalí who dines with his friend Amanda Lear, I say to him: “It is the objective chance”. He answers me: “It is more than that. One will speak tomorrow!” the following day, I find him in the bar of the hotel San Régis.

Dalí agrees with much enthusiasm the idea to play the Emperor of the galaxy. He wants to film in Cadaquès and to use as throne a toilet made up of two intersected dolphins. The tails will form the feet and the two open mouths will be used one to receive the “wee”, the other to receive the “excrement”. Dalí thinks that it is of terrible bad taste to mix the “wee” and the “excrement”.

It is said to him that I will need him for seven days… Dalí answers that God made the universe in seven days and that Dalí, while not being less than God, must cost a fortune: 100,000 dollars an hour. Perhaps that while arriving at the set he will decide to film each day more than one hour for the same price.

The only condition is to have the Emperor on the throne scatologic. He does not want to read script: “My ideas are better than yours”. He wants to choose his court among his friends, wants to say what he wants and moreover, at the time to sign the contract, will condescend to make me gift of three ideas that I will have the right to use or not.

The Daliesque happening will cost us 700,000 dollars. I ask him for time, one night, to make a decision and I leave. That night, I tear off a page of a book on the tarot; there is a reproduced card:

Hanged Man. I write a letter to him by saying to him that the film cannot pay him 700 000 dollars, but which I will try to convince my producer to use him three days for 300,000 dollars.

The following day, I send the letter to Dalí. He will give us his response in Paris.

In Paris, Dalí invites us by telephone to meet it with the Meurice hotel. There is the surprise of not being alone with him: there is a score of people, merchants, models, fine young men, a lady which one calls the King and who is virile, an enormous Dutchwoman who will pose so that Dalí combs her sex, a character who claims to be the grandson of the pétomane (the man which, in 1900, played in the music-halls, and whom Dalí says to us that he did with his bottom what Tino Rossi could not do with his throat).

I do not have the chance of speaking with the painter because he takes us along to a dinner and it is in this dinner that Dalí wants to speak to me about film. In way, I prepare a small questionnaire: how does an Emperor die? How is his palace? How does he get dressed? Etc.

In the festival where I find Mick Jagger, Nathalie Delon, Johnny Hallyday and other celebrities, Dalí shows its enthusiasm for the role of the Emperor and when I give him my questionnaire while saying to him: “I came prepared”. It answers me: “Me also”. From a pocket he pulls the drawing of the toilet made with the two dolphins: “It is completely necessary to see the Emperor making wee and excrement”. I ask to him whether it is ready to show his sex and his anus and he say to me that not and that he would like to be doubled, that he wants only that he is seen sitted.

Dalí known as to regard my card as a contract. He was touched by the image of the Hanged Man and said: “I see the Hanged Man with his hair like roots in the ground and outgoing, by the bottom, a column of sh*t with a capital linking it with the sky”. A few days later, the grandson of the pétomane invites us to give us appointment in Barcelona. But Dalí calls me before again inviting me to lunch and speak about his role. He does not want to be directed (put in scene). He wants to do what he wants. I ask him: “If I were a rich person owner and that I said to paint me what you

would like yourself, but in the octagonal shape of table, you would do it? ”

Dalí: “Yes.”

Me: “Then, it is possible to work together, I will direct you while asking you questions (the form) and you will answer me as you want with actions.”

AMANDA LEAR

Dalí accepts. Me, I think that the battle will be formidable. It will be necessary that I find questions which have only one answer. And, it will be necessary that I envisage his answers as failures.

For example, if I ask how will be equipped the Emperor, it is quite possible that he answers me: “In the 20 century, Dalí will be regarded as God, as today is Christ. The Padishah Emperor will be equipped like Dalí.”

If I ask him how will be his palace, he could answer me: “Like a reproduction of the old station of Perpignan.” If he gives me these two answers, it could kill *Dune* and it should be said to him that there is a limit: Dalí cannot interpret Dalí.

The idea of a similar play authentically seems to me surrealist and I am more than ever ready to work with the painter without taking account of the words of Amanda Lear who, in an aside with the dinner, tempted by the idea to play Irulan, the daughter of the emperor, says to me that the Master is a saboteur by masochism, that finally he always likes the things which fail.

A screenplay writer who made a film for the TV with Dalí said to me that he is unpredictable up to the point to choosing to be filmed in obscure corners, although have spent all the day to light sets, he refuses at the last second to put his feet there.

That gives me the idea to light the day of filming with Dalí not only the set, but also the corridors, the toilets, the roofs, all. If I do not have dark corners, this battle will be gained. It says to me that for him, my card with the image of the Hanged Man is his contract.

To Barcelona, we arrives one late hour. Before going to see him, I decides to face the problem by telephone. I speak with the descendant about the pétomane: “Listen to Sir, do not waste time, we cannot offer Dalí 300,000 dollars. We have 150,000 dollars. If he is not interested, I set out again to Paris. If the business interests him, call us in ten minutes.”

At the end of ten minutes, the small pétomane calls us: “Come, Dalí awaits you.”

Dalí, this time, is relatively alone. Amanda Lear is there with two secretaries. who starts by playfully scorning him, saying: “Dalí is like a taxi, as time passes the more expensive it is, and you, as time passes, the less you want to pay.” I have finally time to introduce Jean-Paul Gibon to him who will defend the interests of Michel Seydoux. I try to reason him. It is difficult and for us almost impossible to film in Cadaquès, that must be done in Paris.

For 150,000 dollars, I want three days and not an hour and half of filming. I would like to also make a polyethylene puppet, his counterpart, to use it like his double in film. Dalí is put in anger: “I will have you like rats! I will film in Paris, but the set will cost you more than the landscapes of Cadaquès and the framework of my museum. Dalí costs 100,000 dollars the hour!”

He is calmed and agreed to the idea of being reproduced out of plastic, if after film I give this sculpture to his museum. I decide to definitively finish the contract the following day. I discuss it with Jean-Paul Gibon and I conclude that it is impossible to haggle with Dalí. I meditate lengthily and I make this final decision: I reduce the role of Dalí to a page and half of script. I accept his price, 100,000 dollars the hour, but I take it only for only one hour. The remainder, I will film it with his double robot. Dalí cannot be allowed either to reconsider its price. I went to see him. I give him the small page and half, and Dalí accepts the proposal because his honor is secure. He will be the most expensive paid actor in the history of cinema. He will earn more than Greta Garbo.

Dalí, with enthusiasm, shows me his bed with the sculpture of dolphin. A workman is already there taking the design of the dolphin to make the toilet.

As much for Dalí as for me, the tarot card of the Hanged Man, on which I wrote some words acted as contract.

Dalí likes the aristocracy and like any man of noble spirit, he respects his word.

With the signature of the contract, I celebrate with a great dinner where Dalí is named Chevalier of Crayfish. He makes me sit by his side and, likewise, he makes sit Pasolini. During all the dinner, he introduces food on the end of his fingers into the mouth of Pasolini.

I worry because I want to be the first to have Dalí as actor and I was astonished to discover with us another director.

Amanda Lear says to me: “You should not worry. Pasolini is only here to request the permission to use a tableau of Dalí for the poster of his film Les Cent-Vingt Journées de Sodome. Dalí requires 100,000 dollars from him. Dalí likes that one fights for him.”

NOT ENOUGH HOLLYWOOD

Me, I liked to fight for *Dune*. Almost all the battles were won, but the war was lost. The project was sabotaged in Hollywood. It was French and not American. Its message was not “enough Hollywood.” There were intrigues, plundering. The story-board circulated among all the large studios. Later, the visual aspect of *Star Wars* resembled our style. To make *Alien*, they invited Moebius, Foss, Giger, O'Bannon, etc. The project announced to American the possibility of carrying out science fiction films to large spectacle and out of the scientific rigor of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The *Dune* project changed our life. When it was over, O'Bannon entered a psychiatric hospital. Afterwards, he returned to the fight with rage and wrote twelve scripts which were refused. The thirteenth one was *Alien*.

Like him, all those who took part in the rise and fall of the *Dune* project learned how to fall one and one thousand times with savage obstinacy until learning how to stand. I remember my old father who, while dying happy, said to me: “My son, in my life, I triumphed because I learned how to fail.”

Translated from the supplement “DUNE LE FILM QUE VOUS NE VERREZ JAMAIS” in Métal Hurlant 107.

Historian of Dune

by Leanne C. Harper,
Mile High Futures, 1985

I first met Paul Atreides in the early Seventies. Since then I have returned to Dune *many times. The man who gave* Dune *to me and millions of others is, of course, Frank Herbert.*

Frank Herbert is a writer who uses his background in journalism to provide the mass of facts which underlie his work. He is not lost on some plane of imagination but in fact, keenly interested in the events transpiring on our *planet. These things come together to form the basis of his novels:* Dune *(first published in 1965) and its four sequels (the fifth,* Chapterhouse Dune *will be published in the spring of 1985), along with* Under Pressure*,* Destination: Void*,* The Jesus Incident *and many others.*

Q: What l'd like you to do first of all is give a thumbnail description of *Dune*, both the book and the movie.

A: Number one, you want to warn your readers that this is not a comic book for the screen the way *Star Wars* was. This is a story about the creation of a messiah on a wilderness planet in the biblical sense. The wilderness of the *Bible*, of course, was the desert. It is a very heavily textured film. It is visually beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze-frame sections of it and saying I want that one on my wall and that one and… I may very well get some of them.

Q: That's great.

A: It is also a very moving, mystical film as you know from having seen it.

Q: Could you talk for just a moment about the story?

A: My theory is that charismatic leaders ought to come with a wanting on their foreheads that says "may be danger to to your health." If you follow a leader without question, you can wind up in Guyana drinking poison Kool-Aid. Or you can wind up in the rice

paddies of Viet Nam because you said yes, Mr. Kennedy. You see?

Q: I take it from your comments that you are happy with the final cut of the film as it appears in the theatres?

A: Oh, delighted with it. It creates that charismatic leader, that messiah, on film precisely the way I did it in the book. Have you read the book too?

Q: Of course.

A: Then you know it begins as *Dune* begins. You hear my dialogue all the way through it. The ending is consistent. They had to cut it. The only way this film could have been made was to spend a lot of money on it and they obviously did. The only way anybody would do that was if you made a theatre film. That meant that they had to cut it down. I imagine that if you did every scene from *Dune* on a film, you'd have at least a fourteen hour film, maybe twenty hours. We already have about five hours of film. They may put it back together as a mini-series in about three years.

Q: That would be wonderful.

A: Every fan is going to have a pet scene missing. I did.

Q: I did, too. I wanted to see the fight between Paul and Jamis.

A: I wanted to see that too and we've got it on film. I also wanted to see the Shadout Mapes offering her blood to Jessica. We have that on film.

Q: In fact in the press kit there is a still from that scene with Linda Hunt and it's not in the final cut.

A: There are some very poignant scenes between Paul and Chani in which she kills a challenger. We've got all of that.

Q: I'll look forward to that. I hope it works out.

A: It will work out if the film itself is successful. And if it's successful, we'll make the other two.

Q: Something that I was struck by in the visual quality of *Dune* was that it had a quite Victorian feel to me.

A: It wasn't Victorian to me; it was Renaissance.

Q: I thought that many of the instruments and ships could fit right into illustrations of books by Jules Verne.

A: H.G. Wells or Jules Verne. Yes, there was a little bit of that but I felt that the way they went to Renaissance art for the backgrounds was a stroke of genius. Because what did I do there? I created a feudal society. How do you say feudalism to our society? It's Renaissance, right? Here is this Renaissance art in the background and most people are at least peripherally familiar with that. They have encountered it in school at least. Here these artists, David (Lynch) and Tony Masters, went to Firenze and Venice and picked up on that background and brought it into this film.

Q: Why didn't you write the screenplay?

A: I did write one screenplay. It was lousy.

Q: Honesty.

A: Well, it was. One of the things that's happened during the making of this film is David has taught me how to write screenplays.

Q: Do you think that you'll be adapting some of your work in the future?

A: I've already done one that everybody is raving about. It is a screenplay of *Santaroga Barrier*. I'm working right now on a screenplay of *Soul Catcher*. I'd like to direct that one.

Q: How involved were you during the filming of *Dune*? Were you around in Mexico very much?

A: Yes. I was technical advisor and a consultant all through the making of the film. As you probably know, I had some problems. My wife was dying during much of this period and I had to be up here at the hospital. But I did spend quite a bit of time in Mexico.

At one point I helped cut fourteen pages out of the screenplay. It had to be done. Otherwise, there would have been no film.

Q: From talking to people on the set, do you think that there is a difference in perception when people are making a science fiction film as opposed to making a "normal" movie? Do they feel they must be more explicit about certain things in order to reach the general public?

A: There had to be some detailed, explanatory stuff which, I imagine, some people will object to, the people who want to be fed their visual pap, the chewing gum for the mind. But this is a challenging film. It challenges you to pay attention. And if you do, it drags you right up into the screen. I've had that pointed out to me by quite a number of people who have never read the book or seen a real science fiction film before.

Q: I think it's very different. I certainly hope the philosophy that you and David Lynch have used with this catches on. I am not a rabid *Star Wars* fan. For what it is, it's fine but…

A: It's a comic book for the screen, it really is. I kid people. I say what I missed most in *Star Wars* were the balloons saying "pow" and "bang."

Q: It's not what I love most about science fiction.

A: Hell, no. What science fiction is is a setting where you can tell a unique story, a story that could not be told under any other circumstances. It's an experience that you couldn't have under any other circumstances.

Q: Which is the wonderful thing about it.

A: Of course it is. It's the thing that attracts the real fans. If you want to go into mainstream, you could not shoot Nordoff and Hall's *Hurricane* on the streets of New York City. You need the South Pacific island, don't you? The setting is as much a character as the people in the film. And that's true of science fiction, good science fiction, too.

Q: I was wondering, particularly with the current Middle Eastern situations, if you saw a modern-day equivalent in the Mideast now to some of the situations on *Dune*?

A: Of course. Any time the religion becomes the government, then when you break a law, you are sinning. That's the ultimate rule of following the leader without question, isn't it? Because if you have a leader up there saying God speaks in my left ear and I am telling you what God says, a leader of that kind is ultimately the most dangerous kind of leader.

Q: What do you see, from your research, happening in the Mideast?

A: I see that the more things change, the more they become the same. I see the recurrence of the ago-old human madness of following a leader without question. Investing your own energies in somebody else's decision-making. And that is a sure way to destruction.

Q: I wanted to talk too about your writing. You've done *Chapterhouse Dune*, the sixth sequel to the original *Dune*.

A: Yes, it comes out in March.

Q: You've written a number of sequels to *Dune*. What are you trying to accomplish with those sequels?

A: I'm a kind of commentator on the current scene. In *Chapterhouse* I have a collision between two enormously powerful forces. If you want to read the Soviet Union and the U.S. into be my guest.

Q: It would not be out of place?

A: It would not be out of place. I use the vehicle of the *Dune Chronicles* as an entertaining story form because if you don't entertain, who the hell is going to read you? So I am number one entertainer. Just as you are. Just as any good journalist is. There is no such thing as absolutely objective reporting. I learned that very early on as a journalist. You always screen it through your own experiences and those experiences color what you do. I decided that I was going to build my own audience and entertain them to the

hilt, as much as I could. Now when somebody comes in and pays eighteen bucks for a book I've written, owe them a good read. Otherwise I'm cheating my readers. And I don't believe in cheating my readers I believe in challenging them: okay, play this game with me.

Q: Which is always to be appreciated by the readers, I think.

A: I have a particular kind of readership. I'm talking to them right straight across, eye to eye, and not down. I also listen to them. I read my fan mail and I send no form letters. Everybody who writes me gets an individual letter back.

Q: That must take an enormous amount of time.

A: A computer helps. But if there is a question that has not been answered before, I have answer it. Otherwise we can go to the computer for the same questions: how do you pronounce this, why did you do this, where did you get this idea, that sort of thing. I have answers in the computer for all of these questions. We can bring them out and go to the letter and answer those specific questions with i words. And my computer prints it. I read it and make sure it’s right and sign it. I read every Ietter.

Q: Do you ever feel you have been trapped in the *Dune* series?

A: Oh, Hell no. No more than a good journalist is trapped by his readership. I have an audience out there and I talk to them.

Q: Many people after they have been doing something for a long time get bored with it. You certainly don't seem to have lost any interest at all.

A: I will write these stories as long as I enjoy them and my readers enjoy them.

Q: Something that I understand that you have done at your home is to put a lot of your philosophies into action.

A: I did up until about three years ago when Bev (Mr. Herbert’s late wife) became increasingly very, very ill. Then I put a lot of that on the back burner. I'll go back to it. I’m in California right now, as

you probably know. That's temporary.

Q: You have a house there in Washington state which is based on sound ecological principles?

A: An ecological experiment station would be the best way to describe it. I try things out. It was an existing home because most of our dwellings in the United States and elsewhere are existing dwellings. So what do we do about them? How do we make than more efficient? That's the game I've been playing.

Q: What about any new projects that you are working on now?

A: I'm plotting the seventh *Dune* book right now.

Q: And other works? I know that you have done at least a couple of books with Bill Ransom.

A: I'll do another one with him. I am doing a collaboration with my eldest son, Brian Herbert, right now. He's sold five books on his own.

Q: There is one coming out in January: *The Garbage Chronicles*.

A: That's right. He's very, sharp wit, a very funny man. We're doing a pastiche on some of the most dearly held cliches of science fiction. Were having fun with it.

Q: Anything else that that you would like to mention?

A: Yes, I want to make sure that you understand that I may put a pot of message in there with the mess of pottage but l'm primarily an entertainer. I want to entertain people; I want to challenge them at the same time.

Q: That is to be respected both as an aim and how you have achieved it. Thank you very much.

The Single Most Important Piece of Advice

BY FRANK HERBERT

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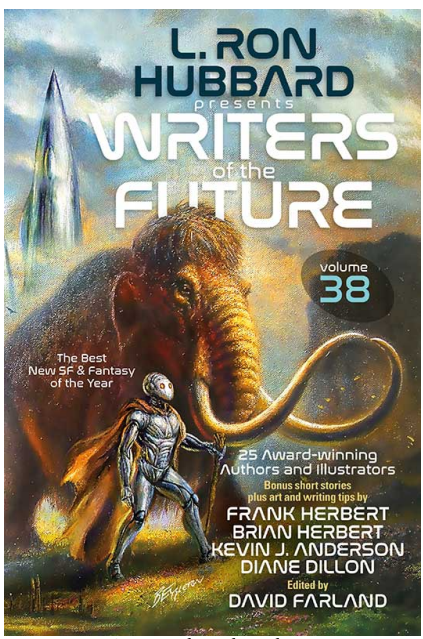


Cover art by Bob Eggleton
From the 2022 edition

Frank Herbert was a reporter and editor on a number of newspapers before becoming a full-time writer.

Although he had been publishing short fiction in various SF magazines since 1952, he became an "overnight" success in 1956 with his first novel, which was serialized in John Campbell's Astounding Science Fiction *magazine as "Under Pressure." (In book form, it's known either as* Twenty-First Century Sub *or* The Dragon in the Sea.*)*

His career took a major turn with the 1963 ASF publication of the first Dune story. Since then, of course, Herbert and the Dune stories have become world famous. It can be fairly said that Herbert was the last of the ASF "Golden Age" writers. Although those fabulous days had drawn to a close, the sweep and grandeur of Herbert's work during the last years of Campbell's editorship compellingly recall the very best of the ASF spirit.

In bringing classical science fiction to worldwide prominence, Herbert ranks among this field's major contributors. An uncompromising stickler for the kind of storytelling principles that are a vigorous SF tradition, Herbert was both popular and respected.

Here is, to our knowledge, the last essay Frank Herbert ever wrote. He gave it to us with the clear purpose of fulfilling what he saw as a paramount obligation to his art and craft.

Proud of his contributions to the Writers of the Future Contest, as a judge, we had asked him for the single most important piece of advice he would give a beginning writer. Here it is:

—

The single most important piece of advice I ever got was to concentrate on story. What is "story"? It's the quality that keeps the reader following the narrative. A good story makes interesting things happen to a character with whom the reader can identify. And it keeps them happening so that the character progresses and grows in stature.

A writer's job is to do whatever is necessary to make the reader want to read the next line. That's what you're supposed to be thinking about when you're writing a story. Don't think about money, don't think about success; concentrate on the story—don't waste your energy on anything else. That all takes care of itself if you've done your job as a writer. If you haven't done that, nothing helps.

I first heard this from literary agent Lurton Blassingame, a highly respected expert on successful storytellers and storytelling. He's a man who's been watching writers' careers and building writers'

careers for decades. And I have heard essentially the same thing from many other successful figures in writing; some of the top writers in the world have said it. It is the best advice I can give beginners.

I'd also like to say something about older hands helping newcomers. Like many other established writers, I teach students on frequent occasions and lecture to many other audiences anxious for advice on writing. I'm very happy to be able to lend my help to the Writers of the Future program. From time to time, though, people have come up to me and asked why I want to "create competition" by helping newcomers.

Talking about "competition" in that way is nonsense! The more good writers there are, the more good readers there will be. We'll all benefit—writers and readers alike!

So the other piece of advice I have for newcomers is: "Remember how you learned, and when your turn comes, teach."

Sifting Through the Dunes

From *Wrapped in Plastic*, Vol. 1 #33
February, 1998.

Produced by
CRAIG MILLER
and
JOHN THORNE
Co-Editors

Front cover designed by Craig Miller from a Dune *photo of Kyle MacLachlan*
© 1984 Universal City Studios

> *"In the case of a film, the worst thing that could happen is a film like* Dune. *Where the film is halfway there and halfway not."—David Lynch. 1990*

> *"The film of Dune is the result of a paradox—a product of an industry that pretends to creativity and shies away from risk….The fact that David [Lynch] was able to translate the written words into screen language*

speaks of his visual genius. If you were disappointed or wanted more, chalk it up to 'That's show biz.'"—Frank Herbert, 1985

Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan) and Chani (Sean Young) in David Lynch's *Dune*
© 1984 Universal City Studios/Dino De Laurentiis Corp.

Sting as Feyd-Rautha in *Dune*
© 1984 Universal City Studios/Dino De Laurentiis Corp.

Introduction

David Lynch's third feature film, *Dune*, has been the subject of much discussion and analysis, most of which focuses on Lynch's lack of artistic control over the project. Few analyses of *Dune*, however, bother to contrast the film with its source material—the novel *Dune* by Frank Herbert. Too often the novel is dismissed as a cult science fiction book that provides merely the basic elements for the Lynch film. But Lynch's *Dune* is an attempt to faithfully adapt the book, to distill five hundred pages of complex plot, characters, and setting into a two-hour film. One cannot properly analyze *Dune*, the film, without giving appropriate consideration to the novel on which it is based.

Analyses of *Dune* usually focus on the anomalous nature of the project, explaining how Lynch did not have the same level of artistic control on *Dune* as he did on previous (and subsequent) movies. Critics point out that Lynch's artistic vision was compromised by *Dune* producers Dino and Raflaella De Laurentiis, and that it was these compromises that contributed to the film's critical and commercial failure. Such observations are valid because they help explain why *Dune* fails to match the powerful and compelling nature of Lynch's other work. Too often, however, these observations fail to place *Dune* in the appropriate context—*Dune* Is examined only as a Lynch film (albeit a collaborative one) and not as a film version of well-known and respected novel.

Like many average movie-goers (and most film critics), fans of the book were disappointed by the film, finding that the movie poorly

conveyed the rich story and setting of the novel. To understand why *Dune* failed both as a "Lynch film" and, more importantly, as an adaptation, we have contrasted three main story elements between the film and novel: plot, character, and setting. An examination of these narrative elements reveals that *Dune* was ambiguous about its source material—at times trying too hard to mimic the book, while just as frequently taking too many liberties with plot and character development. The film version of *Dune* crams an excessive (and sometimes superfluous) amount of detail into the story, yet fails to properly flesh out much of the novel's essential background. Some plot points are new to the film but don't mesh at all with the established world of the novel. In addition, some characters are weak and under-played, while other, secondary characters arc overused or out-of-place. In short, *Dune* seems to be going in many directions at once—its narrative structure both simplified and muddied by an uncertain creative team.

In addition to contrasting the narratives we have also examined various aspects of the film's production (casting, set design, editing, etc.) to see how the rich world of the novel was realized on screen. Some of the ways *Dune* was envisioned were ineffective; too often the film fails to capture the scope and grandeur of the book. Still, Lynch was able to instill much of his own unique style and authorial presence to the *Dune* story, and in this respect *Dune* is a success—the film contains some striking and powerful images and stands out as one of the better-looking science fiction films.

But Lynch's control of the film was limited; producers Dino and Raffaella De Laurentiis had final say on the editing of the film. They also provided a great deal of input to the direction of the script and the look of the final product. Comparison of the film to the book reveals that the De Laurentiis may have had an agenda, that they were designing *Dune* to be the first in a series of films akin to the *Star Wars* or *Star Trek* franchises. As a result, *Dune*, a film which could and should have been more profound and esoteric, was reduced to a generic Hollywood movie—a formula picture that eschewed the philosophical, ecological, and sociological elements of Frank Herbert's novel.

A History of *Dune*

Among all the great science fiction novels, Frank Herbert's *Dune* stands out as a classic in the genre; it is an ambitious, complicated book that works on many levels.

Frank Herbert's conception of *Dune* grew out of his study of the sand dunes along the Oregon coast and his desire to write a novel about society's need for a messiah. As he wrote *Dune,* the book evolved into a complex science fiction saga about ecology, religion, politics, and social engineering-*Dune* was published in 1965, has sold millions of copies, and has never gone out of print. In 1966, *Dune* received both the Hugo and Nebula Awards for best science fiction novel. Herbert wrote five more *Dune* novels over the years, the last of which was published in 1985, shortly after the film version of the first book was released.

Dune is a seminal science fiction text and had a profound impact on the genre. Following the publication of *Dune*, countless authors attempted to create equally intriguing environmental settings for their stories, and many were inspired to examine *Dune*'s ambitious sociological and religious themes further. But *Dune*'s impact went beyond books—the novel also influenced television and film, most notably George Lucas's first *Star Wars* film which, as Frank Herbert noted in a later essay, had as many as sixteen distinct similarities to *Dune* (including a desert planet, a corrupt empire, and a quasi-religious group of trained adepts who could skillfully influence the weak-minded).

It was inevitable that *Dune*, itself, would become a film, but the journey from printed page to big screen was not easy. Originally optioned by Arthur P. Jacobs, (producer of the *Planet of the Apes* series) in 1969, the project fell through when Jacobs unexpectedly died. Years later, director Alejandro Jodorowsky secured the rights to *Dune*. Jodorowsky came very close to making the film, going as far as constructing sets, hiring conceptual artists H.R. Giger. Jean "Moebius" Girard, and Chris Foss, and contracting Salvador Dali to play the Emperor. The project stalled when money ran out, and the production subsequently went into limbo.

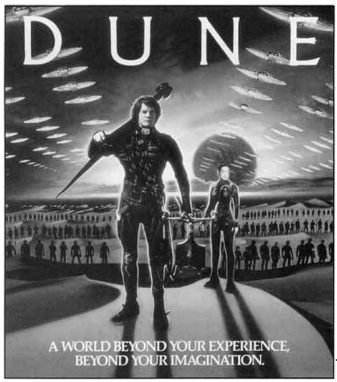
In 1978. Dino De Laurentiis bought rights to the film and hired Ridley Scott to direct and author Rudolph Wurlitzcr to write the screenplay. The two men began to develop their own version of

Dune (with Giger again on board as conceptual artist), but it deviated too much from the novel, and the project again collapsed. Still. De Laurentiis remained committed to realizing a *Dune* Him. After De Laurentiis' daughter. Raffaella, saw David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*, she and her father approached Lynch to direct a big budget version of *Dune*.

David Lynch started writing the screenplay to *Dune* in June of 1981, but a final shooting script was not completed until December of 1982. Principal photography began in March of 1983, and the final cut of the film was released to US theaters in December of 1984. *Dune* made $6 million in its first week of release, but by the end of five weeks its box-office total was less than $28 million. The total production cost of the film was approximately $50 million.

In the years since its release. *Dune* has grown in stature as a cult film. Fans of the book seem to have a love-hate relationship with the movie—it may be flawed, but it's the only film adaptation out there. The extended, "uncut" version of the film is often shown on cable television, and midnight screenings of the theatrical film are not uncommon. Continued interest in *Dune* Is evident in the desire by many to obtain a wide-screen version of the film on home video. Until last year, the only widescreen version available was a Japanese laserdisc set (see *WIP* 15). In 1997. MCA Universal released a wide-screen videotape version of *Dune* in the US. Sales were extremely good (the videotape was the sixth best-selling video in its first week of release), and Universal then released a much requested wide-screen laserdisc of *Dune* in December.

Comparing Film to Novel



When David Lynch and producers Dino and Raffaella De Laurentiis adapted *Dune* for the screen, they made a significant effort to stay true to the book's narrative. Although the film contains some extensive prologue material, both the film and book basically start at the same point (the Atreides' impending move to the planet Arrakis). Likewise, both the film and book end in the same place (on Dune, with the heroes victorious).

The same characters appear in both versions (no significant new characters were added to the film version). Both the film and book recount the same story events, although the film does take a few liberties with the plot. Many of the book's subplots are—understandably—absent from the film plot twists— not part of the original source text—are inexplicably introduced to the film's narrative.

As the rest of this essay shows, the Lynch/De Laurentiis film adaptation of *Dune* seems, at times, a schizophrenic effort: the film-makers strive to stay true to Herbert's original vision, but, at the same time, they introduce irrelevant and contradictory changes to the story. These changes are most evident in the plot of the film, but they also manifest themselves in the way characters are portrayed and in the way setting Is presented.

Plot

The film version of *Dune* attempts to tell much of the story from the book, although many of the story's complex plot points are simplified, and much of the rich background is condensed for the screen. Given a time span of only a few hours (at most), it's not surprising that significant portions of the book never made it to the

screen.

Dune's plot is exceedingly complex: a number of different stories are happening at once. They briefly intersect from time to time and finally coalesce at the story's climax. The story of *Dune*—as presented in the film—focuses on the conflict between House Atreides of the planet Caladan (one of the many ruling "houses" that form the government of the galactic empire) and the evil House Harkonnen—the ruling power of the planet Giedi Prime. Duke Leto Atreides (Jürgen Prochnow)—ruler of house Atreides—is the sworn enemy of the Baron Harkonnen (Kenneth McMillan)—ruler of House Harkonnen.

The Atreides are secretly building an army and training them in the use of a powerful new weapon called a weirding module—a device that can convert sound into a destructive force. Threatened by the potential new strength of the Atreides army and weapon, the Emperor of the Known Universe. Shaddam IV (Jose Ferrer), hatches a plan to eliminate the Atreides. He orders House Atreides to vacate Caladan and to take over rule of the planet Arrakis (also known as Dune). Meanwhile, the Emperor secretly joins forces with House Harkonnen in order to ambush the Atreides and eliminate them.

Dune is a barren, dry planet inhabited by a nomadic race known as the Fremen, a fierce and strong people who believe that someday a messiah will come and lead them to greatness. As the Fremen know. Dune is vitally important to the Empire because it is the only known source of the spice Melange. The spice is a crucial commodity in the Empire—the Spacing Guild needs it because the spice expands consciousness, allowing the Guild Navigators to "fold space" and safely traverse great distances between planets. It is also vital to the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, who use the spice to create the Water of Life—a substance that allows a sister access to the genetic memory of past sisters. The Bene Gesserit are a powerful political force In the Empire. Through selective breeding, they are secretly manipulating the genetic direction of humanity.

The Spacing Guild senses danger In the Emperor's plans to defeat the Atreides. They demand that Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan)—the Duke's son—be killed. Curious as to why the Guild would want Paul dead, the Emperor sends the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen

Mohiam (Sian Phillips) of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood to investigate.

For centuries, the Bene Gesserit's crude form of genetic engineering has been carefully directed toward producing a male Bene Gesserit —a superhuman known as the Kwisatz Haderach who can access both male and female genetic memory. As the Atreides prepare for their journey to Arrakis, the Reverend Mother arrives to determine if Paul is possibly the Kwisatz Haderach. Paul's mother Jessica (Francesca Annis), also a Bene Gesserit sister, had been instructed to bear only females. She defied her orders and gave birth to a male, thereby jeopardizing the Bene Gesserit plan (but also potentially providing it an early success). The Reverend Mother's "gom jabbar" test indicates that Paul Is very likely the Kwisatz Haderach.

Shortly after establishing themselves on Arrakis, the Atreides are betrayed by their personal physician Dr. Yueh (Dean Stockwell). They are subsequently attacked by the Harkonnen's and Emperor's troops. The Duke is killed, and the Atreides are defeated. Paul's various trainers and mentors are scattered: Weapons master Gurney Halleck (Patrick Stewart) becomes a spice smuggler, and Mentat Thufir Hawat (Freddie Jones) is captured by the Harkonnens.

Paul and Jessica escape to the desert and ally themselves with the Fremen, who are led by Stilgar (Everett McGill). The Fremen believe Paul to be the messiah. Paul's exposure to the spice only affirms their belief; the spice gives him the power of prescient vision—the ability to see possible futures. Paul then drinks the Water of Life and proves he is the Kwisatz Haderach. Jessica also drinks the Water of Life, mutating her unborn baby—Paul's sister—Alia (Alicia Witt), into a fully conscious being. Alia is later born with the memories of countless female predecessors.

Paul becomes part of the Fremen culture. He develops a strong relationship with a Fremen woman, Chani (Sean Young), and over time makes her his mate. Paul trains the Fremen with the weirding module and is soon leading a powerful army of well-armed soldiers. After sabotaging spice production, Paul forces both the Emperor and the Baron to come to Arrakis and deal directly with him. Paul and the Fremen confront the Harkonnen troops and defeat the

Baron. After Paul defeats the Baron's nephew, Feyd-Rautha (Sting), in hand-to-hand combat, Paul's victory over the Harkonnens is complete. As the story concludes, Paul forces the Emperor to admit defeat and submit to a new ruler.

This brief summary is an abbreviated version of the plot as presented by the film. But the film is actually an abbreviated (and altered) version of the book. Clearly part of the difficulty in adapting *Dune* for the screen involved deciding how much of the complex plot to keep and how much to discard. This is one of the film's major problems; *Dune* contains a tremendous amount of detail, yet tries to convey it all in the space of a few hours. Those In charge of making the film refused to compromise—to lengthen the film (a box-office taboo) or distill the plot into a simpler narrative (a perceived insult to *Dune* fans and an action that might jeopardize future sequels).

In the book *The Making of Dune* by Ed Naha. *Dune* producer Raffaella De Laurentiis explained, "the biggest challenge (was) to turn that book into a movie and keep all that's in the book In the movie. Some writers tried to change it drastically. Others tried to keep some of the characters and eliminate others. David [Lynch] was really the first to keep the essence of the book in one, tight script."[1] There is a subtle indication in this comment that David Lynch was pressed to produce a comprehensive script—that other, abridged, scripts were rejected. The resulting film, however, is overburdened with detail; the *Dune* story pours from the screen in a deluge of names and places and concepts. *Dune* becomes rushed and chaotic, sometimes faithful to its source material, other times completely ignorant of the Herbert novel.

Contrasting Plots

Frank Herbert's *Dune* presents a palpable fictional setting because the author went to great lengths to define all aspects of the world in which his story occurs. As a result, the book details the political, social, and economic forces that circumscribe the *Dune* universe. Many of these forces are not explicitly defined, but are alluded to as part of the story's complex background. As the novel progresses, the background detail becomes clearer. To appreciate fully the intricacy of the *Dune* universe, readers must consciously engage in

constructing and comprehending the narrative—to involve themselves actively in making sense of the story. In this way, *Dune* is a demanding book, and one that requires time and patience.

In translating the book to film, the makers of *Dune* could have justifiably stripped away much of the story's detailed background to concentrate on the immediate plot. Instead, they chose to include as much of the *Dune* universe as possible. But film viewers, unlike book readers, do not have the luxury to re-read or pause while experiencing the narrative; viewers of *Dune* were expected to absorb a profuse amount of information rapidly.

Dune addresses most of the complex background elements of the book including social forces and political entities such as the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the Spacing Guild, and the Mentats. The film also mentions the CHOAM Corporation (composed of the great houses of the Empire), the Suk Medical School (where Dr. Yueh trained), and the planet Ix (the world of machines). Unfortunately, none of these important entities is properly explained in the film. Already overburdened with plot and characters, the film devotes minimal time to the backstory, barely (and inadequately) establishing the *Dune* universe.

So the film, unlike the book, does not reveal the dangerous and complex nature of the Bene Gesserit and their elaborate breeding plan. Although it attempts to emphasize the importance of the Bene Gesserit through voice-over narration, it fails to explain the motivations for the Sisterhood's actions. We're told only that they are trying to breed a superhuman, not *why*. According to the book, an ancient, violent crusade known as the Butlerian Jihad saw an end to "computers, thinking machines, and conscious robots." In response to the taboo against machines and computers, the Bene Gesserit set out to breed a human computer with "mental powers permitting him to understand and use higher order dimensions." The Bene Gesserit, therefore, were attempting to organically compensate for society's lack of scientific advancement. Their ancient plan for breeding humans is the reason for Paul’s unique nature. Without this crucial information in the film, Paul’s character is only partially defined, and the Bene Gesserit come off as little more than meddling mad scientists.

The film also fails to develop another major player in the Dune universe—The Spacing Guild. Although the film presents more information on the Guild that it does on the Bene Gesserit, it does not adequately explain why the Guild is involved with the Emperor's plans to defeat the Atreides. The book presents the Guild as a cautious observer, hesitant to interfere with the Emperor's politics for fear of disrupting their precious flow of spice. In the film, the Guild is an active force and instigator of events. They command the Emperor to kill Paul (twice) so as to prevent Paul from interfering with spice production.

The Guild of the film is far more aggressive—and dangerous—than the one from the book. The subtle nuances of the Guild's political chicanery are abandoned in favor of a strong, overt Guild determined to control the Emperor's plans. Lynch ignores the fact that an aggressive Guild could just as well take over Arrakis and monopolize spice production itself. Frank Herbert knew, for the story to work, that the Guild had to be passive—so dependent on spice that they were paralyzed to take any type of aggressive action.

Still, the film's portrayal of the Guild strengthens the condensed story. Lynch makes the Guild a central plot factor, using it to emphasize a critical piece of the story—the spice Melange. The Guild's declaration, "The spice must flow!" becomes an edict that helps organize the structure of the plot. The film carefully explains that the spice is critical to the Guild, that it comes from only one source, and that Paul may become a threat to its production. This type of story simplification is crucial for adapting a longer and more complicated work; by hanging the plot around the spice. Lynch makes the story easy to understand. Had Lynch continued with a simple skeletal narrative structure, the movie may have been more comprehensible and palatable to a general movie audience (while still pleasing *Dune* fans who could supply the more complicated backstory themselves).

But a simple plot structure is soon crowded out by overwhelming detail and competing subplots. Admittedly, some of the subplots are necessary, but the film refuses to give any one subplot prominence, and a cohesive narrative line becomes obscured. What's more, despite the film's frequent emphasis on the importance of the spice,

it never physically depicts the substance! Although we see a spice harvester and some food flavored with spice, we never see the real thing. So much plot hinges around the spice (as Lynch successfully clarified) that a more tangible depiction of the substance would have helped focus the "spice must flow" storyline.

Introducing Discordant Technology: The Weirding Module

Dune's competing subplots are further encumbered by a significant plot element introduced in the film but found nowhere in the book: the Atreides development and use of the weirding module, a weapon that uses sound as a destructive force. In the film, the weirding module is the critical piece of the plot—the device eventually allows Paul and the Fremen to defeat the Emperor's elite troops. (The film takes pains to show that the stockpile of weirding modules was sabotaged before the Harkonnen's surprise attack but fails to explain why the Atreides troops weren't armed with these weapons in the first place.)

Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan) with Jessica (Francesca Annis)

The movie contrives to make the new Atreides weapon palatable to fans of the novel by naming it the *weirding* module. Implying a connection to an essential component of the book—the Bene Gesserit "weirding way," a mysterious and powerful form of personal combat. According to the book, the weirding way consists, in part, of using the Voice, a skill that "permits an adept to control others merely by selected tone shadings of the voice." Paul's mother, Jessica, is an expert in the technique and agrees to teach her skills to the Fremen.

In the film. Paul implies that the weirding module is part of the weirding way, but there is no further evidence one has anything to

do with the other. Further explanation would only confuse matters. Does the weirding module imply a potential alliance between the Bene Gesserit and the Atreides? Is the device a supernatural weapon? The film skirts these questions because there are no satisfactory answers—and because Lynch and the De Laurentiis have not fully developed the idea of the weirding module; they merely used the device as a crutch to simplify the plot. Worse, the makers of *Dune* don't seem to realize that a device like the weirding module could never be part of the *Dune* universe.

According to the film, the weirding module is a piece of technology that provides any user (adept or novice) great destructive power. But technology is suspect in Frank Herbert's *Dune* universe. Author and analyst Colin Manlove notes. "*Dune* was written as a reply to Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy, out of Herbert's dislike for impositions of science on history."[2] Herbert's *Dune* establishes a universe where humanity has found means other than technology to survive and advance. Hence, there are Mentats (human computers), Guild Navigators (human "compasses"), and many others who use their highly trained minds and bodies as substitutes for technology. In *Dune*, "humanness" is superior to technology and computers. Therefore, society has outlawed atomic power, limited the study of science and math, and restricted the development of machinery. Most importantly, warfare has reverted to personal combat between skilled warriors. As essayist Lorenzo DiTommaso has succinctly observed. "*Dune* reintroduced the grand conceptions of personal combat and heroic elitism, the presence of crack forces such as the Sardaukar and the Fremen, and the inclusion of personal weaponry like the kindjal, the slip-tip, the shigawire garrote, and the maula pistol."[3] Personal weaponry and hand-to-hand combat are the rule of the day In *Dune*. The unwary and the untrained do not have the comforting insulation of technology to protect them.

Although the film attempts to stay true to the book's altitude toward technology, the presence of the weirding module betrays the ideological make-up of the *Dune* universe. Its presence in the film is one of convenience, a narrative expediency that condenses and simplifies the conflict between Paul and the Harkonnens. The weirding module is also a narrative crutch that unburdens the filmmakers from addressing the novel's more complicated and

intricate source of strength—Arrakis's native inhabitants, the Fremen.

Marginalizing The Fremen

In the book, the Fremen are an underestimated force of fierce warriors. The harsh living condition on Arrakis have made these people strong, ferocious, and cunning. As the book cleverly reveals, the Fremen are as strong—or stronger—than the Sardaukar, the Emperor's elite army of soldiers. The Sardakaur are rigorously trained in one of the Empires harshest environments—the prison planet Salusas Secundus, "an environmental background of such ferocity that it killed six out of thirteen person before age eleven." So, too, the Fremen—a people "already conditioned to the bitterest survival training."

In Herbert's *Dune*, the Emperor plans to bring down House Atreides because he fears Duke Leto will train an army equal in strength and ability of the Sardaukar. While Leto fails to do so, his exiled son, Paul, succeeds by marshaling the forces of the Fremen.

The Fremen are a key plot point in the novel. They are the critical factor that determines the outcome of Paul's conflict with the Harkonnens and the Emperor. Neither the Baron or the Emperor consider the Fremen to be any substantial threat. The Baron, in particular, dismisses them as poor, dirty desert dwellers and believes only a few thousand live on the planet. (Meanwhile. Thufir Hawat, the Atreides Mentat, computes their number to be close to ten million.)

By ignoring the Fremen, the Baron and his allies make a grave miscalculation: they underestimate the vast, fierce army poised at their very doorstep, ready to fight to the death. Paul rallies and trains the Fremen to overthrow the Harkonnens and cripple the Emperor; the Fremen, believing Paul to be their messiah, fervently join Paul's crusade. Supported by millions of the fiercest warriors in the galaxy. Paul easily defeats his enemies.

In the film, the Fremen are marginalized to little more than extras who stand around looking befuddled as Paul tells them what to do. Ironically, the film treats the Fremen with same disdain the Baron

does in the novel. The richness of the Fremen culture, the wisdom of its leaders, the cunning skill of its warriors—all are lost in the film. The weirding module supplants the Fremen as Paul's true secret weapon. Hence, the film has little need for the Fremen other than to act as soldiers to use the weapons Paul supplies. In short, the Fremen of the film become expendable.

By marginalizing the Fremen, Lynch sacrifices a depth of detail and narrative richness that makes the book so compelling and unique. The Fremen were more than a primitive tribe from the desert, they were a sophisticated and evolved culture. But in the film, details regarding their beliefs, customs, and history are missing. (The expanded televised version of *Dune* does contain more Fremen scenes, including the practice of extracting water from the dead, and the process of distilling the Water of Life from young sandworms. Both scenes delineate the harsh and unusual world of the Fremen. The theatrical version suffers from their absence.) From a narrative sense, the Fremen (of the book) represent the common citizen. Ignored and oppressed by the rich and elite who control society. Eventually, the Fremen rise up and change the course of history, defeating the arrogance of tyranny.

For the adaptation. Lynch may have chosen to marginalize the Fremen in order to focus on Paul and his conflict with the Emperor and Baron. But the film, timid about deviating too far from the book's narrative line, insists on following Paul into the Fremen culture. Once there, it awkwardly shows how Paul "tames Shai Hulud" (i.e. summons and rides one of the Arrakeen sand worms), and how he ingests and transforms the Water of Life the way a Fremen Reverend Mother does. Paul's entry into Fremen culture is treated as important (after all, it's a significant aspect of the book), but the Fremen are peripheral to the altered plot, and Paul's immersion in their society carries little meaning. Lacking the context of Fremen history and beliefs, Paul's Journey to become part of the Fremen tribe—and to eventually lead them—is hollow and uninvolving.

In adapting the novel, it seems clear that Lynch and the De Laurentiis were striving to keep as much of the surface story as possible and ignoring the narrative's greater depth. By casually

addressing each of the myriad elements In *Dune*, Lynch ends up with a cluttered, one-dimensional film. Had the filmmakers been bold enough to discard portions of the text completely—truly to streamline the narrative for the sake of coherence—the result may have been a more accessible and ultimately pleasing film.

Characters

The film's failure to portray aspects of the novel's plot successfully is compounded by the way it poorly portrays some of the key characters.

Dune mishandles character perspective as it struggles to maintain the same "shifting" point-of-view used in the novel. The book has an omniscient third-person narrator that is privy to the thoughts of all the characters. In this way, the book might tell the reader what Paul is thinking in a given scene, then reveal Jessica's thoughts, or provide the musings of yet a third character. In the text, these characters function as "focalizers." Through focalizers, the audience sees all the various story elements.) In effect, certain characters act as mediators for story content. Focalization varies depending on the narrative: "it can remain fixed, alternate between two prominent focalizers, or shift among several."[4] In Herbert's novel, focalization continually shifts, revealing various characters's thoughts and presenting these thoughts in italic text.

In the first chapter of *Dune*, the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam tests Paul's humanity with the gom jabbar. Paul passes and intuitively grasps the deeper implications of the Bene Gesserit plan:

> He heard the confirmation in her voice, said: "It's truth!"
>
> She stared at him. *He senses truth! Could he be the one? Could he truly be the one?* She extinguished the excitement, reminding herself: *"Hope clouds observation."*….
>
> Jessica stepped into the room, closed the door and stood with her back to it. *My son lives*, she thought. *My son lives and is…human.*…The door felt hard

> against her back. Everything in the room was immediate and pressing against her senses.
>
> *My son lives*.
>
> Paul I looked at his mother. *She told the truth*. He wanted to get away alone and think this experience through, but he knew he could not leave until he was dismissed.[5]

Within the space of one page, the reader is privy to the thoughts of three different characters.

Lynch attempts the same method of characterization in the film: thoughts are heard in voice-over while character faces are shown in close-up (the closest approximation to "italicizing" on film). But Lynch's attempt to mimic the book's use of inner thought results in both confusion and redundancy. Michael Chion observes. "In [Dune] there is a continuum between the sentences spoken aloud and the inner reflections, without any corresponding sound code to distinguish them….These voices tell us nothing which we could not guess (such as: 'He's going to kill me' or 'I better be careful') and often they repeal what we see."[6]

Use of inner voice is a perfect example of how the film tries too hard to be like the book. But where the novel's focalization techniques succeed because the story is written, the same techniques fail to translate to the movie screen. Author Seymour Chatman notes in his book *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film:* "In film dialogue is not a problem… but the expression of thought is." Chatman explains that. "Cinema cannot convey a character's conceptual thinking with the kind of precision that it conveys (what a character sees)."[7] In Dune, thoughts are confused with dialogue, as if the soundtrack has been miscued. What's more, the use of inner voice lacks subtlety and nuance. Actors stare stone-faced as their thoughts sound aloud; no actor is given the chance to physically convey the emotions of his inner feelings. The rhythm of scenes is broken by long, static closeups, and story momentum is lost from many parts of the film.

Dune presents a plethora of characters, each with different agendas

and motivations. By providing access to each character's thoughts the film foregrounds all the players. In any scene, no single character emerges as a central figure (even though the film, as a whole, does position Paul as the main character, primarily by giving him more screen time). Already overburdened with plot, viewers must work extra hard to distinguish which secondary characters (i.e., all those other than Paul) are important to the story. Had Lynch either eliminated, or narrowed, the use of inner voice. *Dune* may have been easier for viewers to absorb.

Paul Atreides: A Protagonist Out of Focus

In the film. Paul Atreides emerges as a surprisingly weak character. This is partly because the film does not devote enough time to exploring his complex and changing nature. The overabundance of supporting characters crowds him out, and he never emerges as the strong central figure he is in the book. What's more, the many roles Paul plays in the novel are overlooked in the film.

Duke Leto (Jurgen Prochnow) and Dr. Yueh (Dean Stockwell)

Paul, as presented in the book, seems an ideal Lynch character. He suffers various identity crises, and his struggle to understand his role as both man and messiah lends a distinct duality to the character. Themes of identity are obvious: Paul Atreides gains many names as the novel progresses. As an Atreides he is the Duke's son, and later, the new Duke; to the Fremen he is Muad'Dib, Usul, and the Lisan Al-Gaib; to the Bene Gesserit he is the Kwisatz Haderach. Each name represents a distinct identity that carries specific obligations. Paul struggles to fulfill the role designated by each title, but at times he feels inadequate to various responsibilities each entail.

The duality in Paul's character stems from his struggle to resist becoming either the symbolic leader of untamed zealots or the heir to Harkonnen evil (the book reveals that Paul is the grandson of the Baron, a plot point abandoned for the film).

Paul's power to sense the future reveals two probable destinies, both of which repulse him:

> He suddenly saw how fertile was the ground into which he had fallen, and with this realization, the terrible purpose filled him, creeping through the empty place within, threatening to choke him with grief.
>
> He had seen two main branchings along the way ahead—In one he confronted an evil old Baron and said: "Hello Grandfather." The thought of that path and what lay along it, sickened him.
>
> The other path held long patches of grey obscurity except for peaks of violence. He had seen a warrior religion there, a fire spreading across the universe with the Atreides green and black banner waxing at the head of fanatic legions drunk on spice liquor.[8]

Paul struggles to avoid either future path, acting in ways that always leave options open. This internal conflict is the most significant issue with which Paul must deal as the story in the novel progresses.

None of this conflict is present in the film, however. Paul cither moves along a single delineated path of his own choosing or is swept along by events he cannot control. Either way Paul (of the film) has no choices to make, no identity to accept or reject.

The concepts of duality and identity figure prominently in many of Lynch's other films (especially later work like *Fire Walk With Me* and *Lost Highway*), and it seems odd that similar thematic material is missing from *Dune*. Perhaps Lynch was restricted to focusing on Paul's immediate struggle with the Baron and Emperor and not allowed to examine the more complicated inner turmoil of the

character. This makes sense in terms of simplifying the story and may have been a wise approach given the length and format of the adaptation. But had Lynch recognized the richness of Paul (or been allowed to act upon it), the character may have been more resonant than the banal Paul that ended up on the screen.

(Un)supporting Cast: Leto. Jessica, and Chani

Although the depth of Paul's characterization may be missing from the film, he remains a prominent figure. The same cannot be said for two other significant characters—Jessica and Chani. Both women are severely marginalized in the film, their roles reduced to little more than background companions. Such reduction may have been necessary, but where Lynch minimizes two important characters, he inexplicably *expands* the roles of others, particularly that of Duke Leto.

The Duke makes few appearances in the book and is killed off early into the story. Although he has some significant scenes with Paul, much of his activity takes place off stage (or, to use a more appropriate metaphor, in the margins).

The Duke's presence in the film, however, is far more evident, especially in the scene where he instructs Paul about the "sleeper" within:

> *Leto:* "A person needs new experiences…they jar something deep inside, allowing him to grow. Without change, something sleeps inside us…and seldom awakens. The sleeper must awaken."[9]

These lines significantly impact Paul's later actions ("*The sleeper has awakened!*" becomes his rallying cry) and establish Leto's importance in the story. Leto is positioned as a strong influence on Paul—the person who best prepares him for the hardships that lie ahead. Leto is so important that, later, long after Leto has died. Paul cries out to his father after taking (and surviving) the Water of Life. By acknowledging Leto at this point, the film explicitly signifies his relevance—Paul's destiny is not fulfilled until he acknowledges his father's guidance and wisdom.

The "sleeper must awaken" dialogue was added by Lynch—it appears nowhere in the book. In the novel, Paul's conversation with his father is more about the Spacing Guild and the revelation that Paul is to train as a Mentat (another subplot eliminated from the film). Despite Leto's love and caring for Paul, he remains a somewhat distant figure in Paul's life, too preoccupied with the responsibility of leading the Atreides troops to take time to impart sage wisdom to his son.

One might think that a condensed adaptation of *Dune* would choose to minimize the presence of Leto, to make him a brief and fleeting character (especially when there are stronger, more vital characters to develop). Lynch takes a different tack—Leto's presence is enlarged. In turn, one of the book's most crucial characters, Jessica, is diminished. As Chion observes, the Jessica of the novel is "a pitiless, resolute woman with an influential voice. She is also the book's second most important character, present in a great many scenes narrated from her point of view….In the film, through a radical reversal. Jessica becomes a gentle woman, a solicitous mother and wife, and finally a docile and discreet companion in flight."[10]

Likewise Chani—Paul's true love, and a strong Fremen leader—is also diminished. In the book, Chani guides Paul in the ways of the Fremen. She also holds a religious position within the tribe and is capable of advising even Jessica in matters regarding the Water of Life. But the film portrays her as minor character, inferior to Paul, and practically unnecessary to the story. As authors Elisabeth and Michael Liddell observe in their essay. "*Dune*: A Tale of Two Texts." Chani is always in a "subservient relationship to Paul, a nurse-figure who declares that he is her life or something equally fatuous; at the end she briefly appears as a warrior riding one of the worms…but it is without resonance. She is little more than a convenience."[11]

The film's marginalization of Jessica and Chani inadvertently diminishes the character of Paul, who is best understood in relationship with the women around him—especially his mother. While many characters prepare Paul for the role(s) he must assume, none is more important than Jessica. She trained Paul in the Bene Gesserit weirding way long before the Atreides left Caladan. Much

later, when the two are stranded in the desert. Jessica insists on continuing his training:

"When we've rested." Jessica said "we should continue with your lessons."

He suppressed a sudden anger, said: "Mother don't you think we could do without…."

"Today you panicked." she said…."The body does things of itself sometimes. Paul and I can teach you about this. You must learn to control every muscle, every fiber of your body. You need review of the hands. We'll start with finger muscles, palm tendons, and lip sensitivity." She turned away. "Come, into the tent, now."[12]

Even as Paul assumes a leadership role. Jessica remains a strong influence. She recognizes the importance of imparting her wisdom, especially at times when Paul's emotions might overwhelm him. After Paul has killed the Fremen Jamis in a duel. Jessica acts quickly to leach Paul the gravity of his actions:

> *It must lie done now and swiftly*. Jessica thought.
>
> She compressed ultimate scorn into her voice and manner, said: "Well-l-l, now—how does it feel to be a killer?"
>
> Paul stiffened as though he had been struck. He met his mother's cold glare and his face darkened with a rush of blood. Involuntarily he glanced toward the place on the cavern floor where Jamis had lain.[13]

Here Jessica continues to shape Paul, guiding him through youth into adulthood. Even later in the novel, when Paul has become the leader of the Fremen, and a man who threatens the Emperor himself. Jessica plays a significant advisory role to her son. Unfortunately, none of these characteristics are apparent in the screen version of Jessica. Herbert's strong, wise, tenacious character is replaced by a passive woman, someone swept up by events she is unable to control or comprehend. Lynch's re-characterization of

Jessica is a severe blow to the story and one that inadvertently affects the way Paul is perceived. The film positions Paul as a loner —a protagonist who must find his own way in the world. Jessica presence is so diminished that Paul is practically an orphan, one whose father has been killed, and whose mother has mentally withdrawn from life.

Just as the film's marginalization of the Fremen significantly alters the plot, the marginalization of Jessica and Chani alters the dynamics of the story. Gone are the complex inter-relationships between the main characters. With Paul presented as a conventional hero (following in the footsteps of his father). Jessica and Chani become stereotypical females—the damsel in distress or the innocent bystander. The film version of *Dune* cannot escape the conventions of the genre—one that demands strong male characters and weak females.

Casting: Bringing Dune's *Characters to Life on Screen*

The poor development of the Paul character is compounded by Kyle MacLachlan's ineffective performance. MacLachlan is a skilled actor, but *Dune* was his first major role—and his first time working in film. As the lead. MacLachlan was responsible for carrying the film, a task that may have been too much for the young and untested actor.

Dune is very much Paul's story, and the role required an actor with great range and skill. While MacLachlan looked the part and probably understood the role (he claims to have read the book numerous times and felt an identification with Paul), he lacked the experience needed to portray a naïve boy who must mature through manhood into the role of hero. Despite his capabilities. MacLachlan frequently seems overwhelmed by his character.

MacLachlan's Paul is unconnected to the world around him, unaffected by the harsh alien environment of Arrakis. Perhaps MacLachlan could not properly envision the world in which he was supposed to be (much of which relied upon post-production special effects). The result, unfortunately, is a hero who seems lost. A perfect example of Paul's (re: MacLachlan's) unconvincing reactions occur when Paul first rides a giant sandworm. His wry smirk to

Stilgar is comical, as if MacLachlan—not Paul—were embarrassed to be in such a position. Martha Nochimson makes a similar observation: "[Paul] seems less a hero we have been trained to love than someone who is dressed up and playing cowboy. This is particularly true when he rides the worms that he has mastered, giddy with the rapture of the deed as if asking, 'Did I really do this?'"[14] A more appropriate reaction from Paul might combine awe with reverence for the power he's tamed. But MacLachlan (and, by extension, Lynch) seems unable to fathom Paul's world, and so his character never becomes a convincing person; Paul never becomes more than the actor portraying him.

Fortunately other actors fare better in their roles. A few deliver remarkable performances and successfully bring to life (on screen) their textual counterparts.

Most striking among the ensemble is Francesca Annis as Jessica. Though her character is severely diminished from the book (and she becomes less important as the film progresses), Annis superbly captures the subtle complexity of Jessica. She is a powerful and mysterious protagonist in whom Annis ably conveys both strength and vulnerability. Although Jessica is a weakened version of the novel's character, Annis manages to salvage the role, optimizing those qualities in the character which come closest to Herbert's original vision. Had there been a lesser actress in this role the character may have been totally lost.

Paul Atreides

Another strong performance comes from Kenneth McMillan as the Baron Harkonnen. McMillan has the difficult task of portraying an outrageous, over-the-top villain, without allowing the character to erode into absurdity. The Baron floats and lurches through the air, pouncing on defenseless victims and showering in black, oily liquids. He cackles and drools and acts in an overall repulsive manner. But despite this ludicrousness. McMillan never allows the character to become camp or laughable. The Baron is explicitly evil, and McMillan's performance (combined with Lynch’s technique at crafting blunt, horrific villains) keeps the Baron a terrifying presence throughout the film.

A few supporting actors also do well in their roles. Patrick Stewart uniquely captures Gurney Halleck—the tough weapons-master who trains and advises Paul. Sian Phillips is outstanding as the mysterious, impersonal Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam. Brad Dourif brings some rare humor to the film as Piter de Vries, the Harkonnen Mentat. All three of these actors bring a unique vitality to some important supporting characters.

Other actors fare less well, however. Sting's Feyd-Raulha Harkonnen is unnecessarily insolent where the character should be cunning and

deceptive. Both Jürgen Prochnow and Dean Stockwell deliver wooden performances (as Duke Leto and Dr. Yueh, respectively), never quite realizing the fullness of their characters. Sean Young is also disappointing as Chani, but her lackluster performance may have less to do with her acting skills than poor scripting and character definition.

Finally, Everett McGill's prosaic portrayal of Stilgar fails to live up to Herbert's description of the character. One of the story's strongest protagonists, Stilgar was a fierce, mysterious man, prone to few words and little emotion. A wise leader, Stilgar had "an aura of power that radiated from him." For the film. McGill was in the unenviable position of playing the leader of the now inconsequential Fremen. As such, he becomes little more than a lackey for Paul. Obedient and—of all things—paternal, McGill's Stilgar is a pale version of the character from the book.

Despite *Dune*'s few casting missteps, the film benefits from many strong performances by capable actors. Many of the performances do justice to the book, and since most of the actors look and act their parts, *Dune* succeeds in a most critical area—bringing Frank Herbert's complex and wide ranging characters to life. *Dune*'s casting was so good that it may explain why, in part, the film has lasting appeal to fans of the book. Many of *Dune*'s most fascinating characters arc made even more memorable by their vivid recreation on screen.

Setting

Few would argue that *Dune* is a beautiful film, filled with compelling images. David Lynch's visual interpretation of Frank Herbert's exotic milieu is the film's strongest feature. As we will discuss below. Lynch turned *Dune* Into a visually stunning film, offering some of the most memorable images in the genre of science fiction film.

Dune most notably succeeds with its vast, elaborate sets; the interiors of the film superbly convey the rich and varied cultures of the story. Each prominent world is represented by a unique design theme. The Emperor's throne room on planet Kaitain is a huge, ornate set composed primarily of gold, "to convey the corrupt sense

of wealth exuded by the Emperor."[15] The room, with its columns of cascading gold tile and ceiling of gold stalactites, is a monument to decadence. The sprawling throne room perfectly conveys the Emperor's power and formality.

The interiors of the planet Caladan are based on a wood motif. Paul's study/training room resembles an elaborate hunting lodge with heavy wooden beams across the ceiling and beautiful carved panels adorning the walls. Castle Caladan is a warm, earthy place, appropriate for the just and righteous House Atreides.

The Arrakis interiors are composed of sand and stone. Rock-hewn corridors snake through the bowels of the Arakeen palace, and giant blocks of stone form the wails of the palace's main hall. Fitting the harsh conditions of the planet, the palace looks as if it were constructed using only the raw materials of Arrakis.

Finally, there is the Harkonnen home world, Giedi Prime. The oily, sooty, metallic world is pure Lynch, unrestricted from the confines of movie producers or source text. Giedi Prime resembles the industrial landscapes that Lynch favors; steam hisses from floors and walls, machinery throbs in the background, rooms and corridors are made of cold metal. Similar environments are evident in the urban landscapes of *Eraserhead*, the morgue in *Blue Velvet*, and the prison of *Lost Highway*. In *Dune*, Lynch was delighted in designing an entire world of metal and steam. "When I was filming stuff on Giedi Prime I'd get close to laughing…but that was because I loved the sets so much. I was just *so* happy."[16]

Lynch took the most liberties with the look of Giedi Prime; the film version of the world in no way resembles the that of the text, where the planet was home to brick buildings and open-air streets. Giedi Prime of the book was a rough, rudimentary place (in keeping with the Empire's moratorium on machinery and technology). Although Lynch radically altered Giedi Prime for the screen, the result is one of the film's greatest visual successes—a world of prisons and torture chambers, smokestacks and hydraulics. In short, a vile, oppressive planet, perfectly suited to the evil Baron and his family.

All in all, the sets in *Dune* are a triumph. Seen in a theater or on widescreen laserdisc, the sets establish a palpable world of the

future—an essential attribute of any science fiction film.

Unfortunately, the exteriors in *Dune* fail to live up to the impressive interior sets. On other films this might be forgivable, but in *Dune*, exterior is essential. *Dune*'s story may be about politics, religion, and power, but it is also about environment and how place shapes a people and culture.[17] The very title of the story implies a unique environment: by naming his entire epic *Dune*. Herbert explicitly emphasizes place (or setting) as a vital component of the plot.

The book painstakingly describes Arrakis as a vast, desolate world—one of epic and, ironically, *cinematic* scope:

> Folds upon folds of dunes spread beyond their shelter. Away from the setting sun, the dunes exposed greased shadows so black they were like bits of night.
>
> And the flatness.
>
> His mind searched for something tall in that landscape. But there was no persuading tallness out of heat-addled air and that horizon….[18]

The film version of *Dune* in no way captures the expansive, world-spanning deserts of Arrakis. Scenes shot in the desert are tight and confined, rather than open and wide. Horizon shots are rare. The vast emptiness of the planet is never visually established.

Dune needed to be a grand epic, similar in look to *Lawrence of Arabia*. But the choice of filming in Mexico (where much of the principal photography was shot) presented obstacles to realizing a much-needed epic scope. Many of the exteriors were shot outside Mexico City at a place called Las Aguilas Rojas, "a rocky site that would double for sections of Arrakis."[19] Lynch referred to Las Aguilas Rojas as "Dead Dog Dump" because of the dead animals and other trash the production crew needed to clean away before the site was suitable for filming. Because the site was confined and relatively small, portraying a vast landscape became impossible. What's more, some exterior scenes were actually shot on interior sets: "A section of the planet Dune itself…filled an entire sound

stage, a mass of rolling hills and sand dunes constructed out of timber and foam rubber that was 125 feet long, 165 feel wide and 62 feet high."[20] (Hardly the wide expanses of the book.)

With the landscapes of Arrakis confined to refurbished garbage dumps and enclosed interior sets, the sweeping world of Dune—essential to the story as the source of the invaluable spice, home of the fierce Fremen, and a place that hones the skills of Paul Atreides—is severely diminished. The result is a film with a schizophrenic feel—a movie with epic interiors, but puny, confined exteriors. By not properly capturing the immensity of Dune, the film fails in the one place it should—and could—have succeeded.

Production Design

As previously mentioned. *Dune*'s greatest successes are its look and sound. The sets and production design, the costumes and props, the sound and special effects are all brilliantly displayed on screen. Much of the film's visual and aural splendor is due to David Lynch, who was an active participant in all aspects of *Dune*'s designs and effects.

Dune's look is distinctly Lynch, and while the film suffers in a number of areas because of Lynch's approach, it succeeds magnificently in others because of his unique artistic sensibilities. Who else could have imagined the horrific world of the Harkonnens? To complement the look of this oppressive world, Lynch interprets the Harkonnens as vile, vulgar beings. The Baron's face oozes with pus and open sores, his tortured servants are forced to have eyes and ears sewn shut (foreshadowing, perhaps, the excised ear in *Blue Velvet*), and all Harkonnens are ruthlessly fitted with "heart plugs." devices which apparently allow someone's heart to be "uncorked" causing painful, agonizing death.

Heart plugs are an invention of the film: they appear nowhere in the text. One wonders at the logic or function of such devices; everyone on Giedi Prime has one, including the Baron, yet they make the body vulnerable to sudden death. The Baron himself suffers from such a demise at the hands of Alia during the film's climax. Why would anyone expose themselves to such obvious danger? The film provides no answer, but it's safe to assume that

Lynch found the idea original and appealing—and perhaps a way to illustrate Harkonnen hubris. (Despite its gruesome appeal, the heart plug detracts from plot and character. Lynch is great at film aesthetics, but sometimes poor at integrating such aesthetics into believable fiction.)

Spacecraft and Ornitopthers: The Machines of Dune

Lynch's visual sensibility is evident in other parts of the film, including the design of the film's spacecraft. The few spacecraft seen in the movie all conform to basic geometric shapes: Guild ships are huge cylinders; Atreides crafts are long, narrow ovoids; the Emperor's ship is basically a pyramid. *Dune* production illustrator Ron Miller explains. "I…found that David hated over-detailed models—the kind that looked as if they've been dipped in glue and rolled in model parts. So *Dune*'s unusual, clean-lined ship designs all go back simply to things David cares for."[21] The basic, uncluttered shapes of the Guild heighliner and the Atreides ships stem from Lynch's minimalist philosophy—a belief that a simple image often conveys more than a complex one.

Lynch's minimalist approach backfires only when it comes to the design of ornithopters—one of the book's unique and most memorable forms of transportation. Ornithopthers are a simplistic—though eccentric—type of craft, possibly the result of the Empire's effort to minimize technology. Only slightly more complicated than a hang-glider, ornithopters were light-weight craft that used jet engines for take-off and emergencies only, then depended on the use of extended, bird-like wings to remain aloft and to control direction.

Ornithopters are a unique component of the book, and they add a quirky flair to the story, as in the following passage where both Duke Leto's ornithopter, and his escort, land to rescue the crew of a doomed spice harvester:

> He hauled back on the controls as the 'thopter glided in beside the crawler. The wings tipped up, braked the 'thopter to a skidding stop within twenty meters of the factory….

> With a loud flapping the spotter aircraft glided down to the sand on the other side of the crawler. The Duke’s own escort swooped in to land in line with him.[22]

The film totally abandons the book's ornithopter design in favor of a basic—strikingly unimaginative—craft that has no wings (unless you count the small stubs jutting from the fuselage) but is still called an ornithopter. These ornithopters appear as little more than small-occupancy spacecraft. As *Cinefex* 21 reported, Herbert's ornithopter design was discarded because the production designers felt such a device would be "laughed off the screen." *Dune* Production Designer Anthony Masters explains that Lynch’s design for the ornithopters employed "a concept he called 'ether benders'—large magnetic pads fixed on the bottom of the 'thopters which used anti-gravitational fields to push them away from the surface of Arrakis. This concept made the use of wings totally superfluous."[23] Such a comment hints at efforts to *correct* Frank Herbert's ideas, as if Herbert had not fully imagined, or explained, his complex world.

Perhaps the design of the onithopters did need changing in order to make them more believable, but this example of the filmmaker’s approach to redesigning *Dune* is too dismissive of the source material and once again introduces technology to a world that shuns machines and complex devices.

Visual Poetry

Lynch’s skill at creating dreamlike sequences on film enrich *Dune* with unforgettable imagery. Throughout the story, Paul experiences powerful dream images while both awake and asleep, and these dreams provide Lynch ample opportunity to create startling and transcendent visuals.

The Reverend Mother Ramallo with Fremen Virgins

Early in the film Paul dreams of Chani, and then dreams of a single drop of water slowly falling into a pool. As the images progress, their tranquility is torn away by the image of a cackling Feyd-Rautha, whose oppressive visage overwhelms Paul (and the viewer). This dream sequence, and a similar one later in the film, is masterfully produced, complemented by rich aural textures that are essential to Lynch's dream images. Lynch described these scenes in *Dune* as abstract, and "a kind of poetry."

Paul's dreams and visions occur in the book, but in a simple, straightforward way—a list of things for the reader to remember. Lynch beautifully interprets the dreams on film, creating haunting and meaningful images to convey the prescient abilities of Paul. Few other directors could have created such alluring—and appropriate—visuals.

Lynch's artistry is also evident in the way he depicts the secrets of the Guild Navigators and their techniques to "fold space." The book glosses over how the Navigators move ships from one place in the galaxy to another. There is one brief line about how Navigators live a life in a "mind-groping-ahead-through-posslble futures that guide hurtling spaceships." and another explaining how the Guild uses "the spice drug of Arrakis to produce the limited prescience necessary for guiding spaceships through the void." But, for the most part, the book ignores the Guild's secret practices, leaving the reader, like the characters, wondering how these mutated humans perform their crucial duties.

Since the book provides little detail about the Guild and its methods. Lynch seized the opportunity to fashion his own interpretation. His concept of the Guild being physically and

mentally altered by the spice is a unique, but natural, extension of facts established in the book, and yet his take on the Guild and its practices remains appropriately mysterious.

Lynch establishes that "Third Stage" navigators (one of which appears to the Emperor at the beginning of the film) are able to bend space and time in what could be interpreted as a higher plane of reality. As Anthony Masters explains. "Inside the heighliner cockpit is a mini-universe—almost a jelly substance which is pliable. By molding this substance, the navigators can, in effect, not only change the universe but alter the position of their own ship within it."[24] Lynch creates an entirely organic place and process—one where the navigator "screams" a beam of light into a void to open a path between worlds. The Guild ships disappear from one place and rematerialize at their destination. In the films, ships no longer "hurtle" through space: they elegantly fade in and out of existence.

Putting the Pieces Together: The Final Dune

As we've seen, *Dune* is a film filled with contradictions. Some crucial plot points from the novel are abandoned while new ones are poorly integrated into the narrative; some characters are less defined than they should be while others are well-realized; the "world" of *Dune* is marvelously depicted in some scenes, frustratingly flat in others. The film's flaws are significant enough to disappoint fans of the book even though much of the fundamental pieces of the novel are in place. At the same time, the film fails to please a general audience because it tries to cram *too much* of Herbert's story into two and-a-half hours.

Dune works best during its first hour. The film's pace is more leisurely, the story more compelling, the images on the screen more fascinating. About halfway through the film (when Paul and Jessica flee to the desert) something goes awry in the way the story is presented. As Paul and Jessica enter the Fremen culture the film becomes darker and more claustrophobic, and the story pace accelerates in a confusing and erratic manner.

The editing becomes choppy and obvious—scenes seem tacked together with little care for how one sequence should flow into

another. Some scenes are out of place and confusing (such as Jessica's decision to take the Water of Life, and its impact on her unborn baby), while others contain superfluous information (the interrogation of Thufir Hawat on Giedi Prime, or naming Paul's personal Fremen guard the Fedaykin. These scenes may have been relevant to a longer work, but in the theatrical cut they are extraneous).

It's common knowledge that Lynch did not have control of the final edit of *Dune*, but he did assemble a rough cut that he described as "really long." Lynch's rough cut probably resembles the extended "TV version" of the film (a version from which Lynch has removed his name, since it was put together without his approval). This longer version (often aired on television, and also available in the Japanese laserdisc box set) fleshes out some of Dune's various plotlines, adds relevant scenes to the latter half of the film, and extends some sequences that were severely abridged for the theatrical version.[25] Had Lynch been allowed more say in the final edit he would certainly have molded his rough cut into a shorter film, but one that would have been more polished than the resulting theatrical version.

But someone else—probably Raffaella De Laurentiis—oversaw the final edit, and the result is a rushed, choppy film in which some scenes are joined *in media res*, and others are cut off in the middle. As David Foster Wallace observes. "The movie looks gutted, unintentionally surreal."[26] Comparing the longer version to the shorter, reveals just how choppy the theatrical film is; scenes throughout the latter are bowdlerized, leaving the film stripped of subtlety and dimension. The theatrical version of *Dune*—especially its second half—is a sequence of action scenes recklessly strung together. The result is a film that feels more like an outline than a fully developed story.

According to narrative theory, every story is composed of "events," each linked to one another to form a narrative chain. In such a chain, certain events are more important than others because they act as crux points, or hinges, in plot direction. These events, known as *kernals*, cannot be deleted from the story without ruining the narrative structure. Each story also contains secondary events that

add detail and elaborate story. These minor events, or *satellites*, give a narrative its aesthetic quality; they tell more about a character's idiosyncrasies or moods, reveal subtleties of landscape, or explain the practices of a culture. Without satellites, a story is simply a list of actions. Satellites enrich the story, forming it into a more vibrant, artistic whole.

Unfortunately the second half of *Dune* eliminates many of its satellite events, leaving only kernal information. The result is a story whose unique characteristics have been sifted away, leaving only a headlong rush of action upon action. As Kenneth Kaleta observes in his book *David Lynch*, "The continuous introduction of facts and characters comes at the expense of developing any of the material…. Further, characters simply exist to be seen. They are on screen without actions to carry the plot."[27]

The theatrical version was further harmed when entire scenes—crucial to character and plot—were excised from the film. The most notable scenes are Paul's fight with the Fremen Jamis and the sequence where Jamis's water is extracted and given to Paul—two scenes that establish Paul's prowess and acceptance into Fremen culture. Another critical scene—beautifully rendered by Lynch—shows how the Water of Life (a vital plot element) is milked from a young sandworm. These scenes, and many others (Jessica's confrontation with her housekeeper, the Shadout Mapes; the Duke's alliance with Liet Kynes—the true Fremen leader; and the revelation that Chani is the daughter of Kynes) were sloppily eliminated from the film.

There's no question that editing is essential to any film, certain subplots can (and should) be abandoned in favor of brevity and clarity. But, from the beginning, *Dune* was scripted to include too many pieces of the book's complex plot and background. Tinkering with the already filmed subplots in order to shorten the film was a risky proposition. Perhaps Lynch—and especially the De Laurentiis—should not have been so adamant about forcing so much of the plot into the script. Had they foresight enough to recognize the difficulty of conveying such complex material, they may have reworked the script into a more simplified adaptation.

The De Laurentiis were determined to "keep all that's in the book in

the movie." They were also determined to keep the running time shortened to less than two and a half hours—an impossible task. In a recent interview with Chris Rodley, Lynch commented on the shortening of the film: "Because they made me make the movie in two hours and seventeen minutes…a mound of stuff had to go. And the rest of it had to go into a garbage compactor to push it together. You'd have a line Instead of a scene and the line would be in voice-over. It's not a way to go."[28]

To compensate for the extreme editing, the producers turned to extensive voice-over narration to explain plot and background. *Dune* begins with not one, not two—but *three* expository narrations (The Princess Irulan's introduction, the Guild's report, and Paul's internal monologue about Arrakis, the Harkonnens, etc.). Irulan's voice-over was a last-minute addition inserted after principal photography had wrapped in Mexico. According to *Cinefex* 21. "Before leaving Mexico, it was decided that an expository introduction to the complex narrative would be needed, and so Virginia Madsen [who played Irulan] was recalled to duty."[29]

Despite Irulan's detailed set-up, a second voice-over (the Guild's secret report) was added after test audiences were still confused about plot. Yet this voice-over, designed to clarify, is still overburdened with information; it explains that the story is about the conflicts between four planets. Asking the audience to absorb complicated information about *four* planets is too much. Only one planet has any real importance (Arrakis). Another, Giedi Prime, is of moderate importance because it is the home of the story's villains. The Emperor's planet (Kaitain) is not even part of the novel and barely appears in the film, and Caladan (the first home of the Atreides) is insignificant to the story (Caladan is gone from the book before page 50). Surely this second expository voice-over could have clarified the story's conflict in a more succinct way. By the time of its addition, however, the producers were desperate to reign in their massive project and probably felt all pieces of the story needed to be explained up front.

Paul's internal monologue further complicates matters. His observations contain far too much exposition—some of which is totally extraneous to the story. For example, Paul comments on the

planet Bene Tlexeiu, home of the Mentats—a world that has nothing to do with the plot. An audience already reeling with complex names and relationships hardly needs to process information that has no bearing on the story. A similar reference is made earlier by the Guild Navigator, who explains to the Emperor that he has just arrived from the planet Ix—a world where there are many machines. Even the Emperor seems perplexed by this comment. The navigator has nothing else to say about Ix, and no further explanation is given in the film. The inclusion of Ix in the story is odd; Ix is barely mentioned in the novel and only becomes important in later books in the series. Why was such an obscure reference made, when the producers were striving to explain the already burdensome plot to viewers?

Perhaps the reference to Ix, the inclusion of complex background Information in the voice-overs, and the demand for a comprehensive script stemmed from the producers's desire to make *Dune* the first in a series of films—a franchise akin to the *Star Wars* series. Lynch was prepared to direct at least one sequel: "I was really getting into *Dune II*. I wrote about half the script, maybe more, and I was really getting excited about it. It was much tighter, a better story."[30]

Paul Atreides with the Fremen, Chani (Sean Young)

By the time of the film's release, the first *Dune* novel had spawned four additional books (with a fifth in the works). The De Laurentiis obviously felt that making the series of books into a series of films could be a successful and lucrative venture—but only if the first film adequately addressed later subplots. So, valuable time is devoted to the Duncan Idaho character (who could easily have been removed from a streamlined adaptation without hurting the story), to exploring the bizarre nature of Paul's sister Alia (whose function is vital to the plot, but who could have been simplified for the adaptation), and to crowding the narrative with details that have no bearing on the immediate storyline. As the film devotes time to nonessential information it neglects (as we have explained) story background that could have helped orient viewers to the immediate narrative.

When examining the film by itself, the choice of which parts of the novel are included and which are excluded seems erratic and illogical. If *Dune* is examined as the first film in a series, however, then some of the superfluous plot elements make more sense. But the fact is, *Dune* did *not* become the first of many films. It stands alone, brimming with extraneous, confusing information. While

some may think the De Laurentiis should be praised for ambitiously setting the stage for future films, they should, in fact, be admonished for constructing a film that should have been self-contained and cohesive.

(Anti)Climax

Dune's problems only worsen as the film progresses. The complex, confusing narrative rushes headlong into a messy, Ineffectual climax. As the final scenes unfold, *Dune* is transformed into a standard action film—complete with a stereotypical climactic battle, in one of the film's most poorly conceived sequences. Paul and the Fremen charge into battle against the Emperor's troops riding dozens of sandworms. The sequence is exaggerated and pretentious, and so poorly orchestrated that the film degrades into B-movie material.

Yet another liberty in the adaptation, the climactic battle barely resembles the one from the book. There, the Fremen overpowered the Emperor's troops in simple, hand-to-hand combat. No worms appeared. But, in an attempt to make *Dune* a cinematic spectacle, the filmmakers insist that Paul and his Fremen troops lake part in a sensational battle—one where they gloriously ride atop sandworms and scream into weirding modules. Perhaps the idea sounded good on paper. On screen, the sequence is clumsy, slow, and hard to follow—an embarrassing climax to a story that aspires to a more elegant denouement.

The filmmakers' ruination of the climax does not end with the cartoonish battle. They insist on eliminating the story's villain—Baron Harkonnen—by having him sucked into the gaping maw of an approaching worm. This befitting fate for the Baron was likely designed to please the audience, even if such an occurrence made no sense to the story and differed greatly from the Baron's simpler death in the book, one where he is cut by a poisoned knife:

> The Baron fell back. His eyes bulged as he stared at the red slash on his left palm. "You…you…." He rolled sideways in his suspensors, a sagging mass of flesh supported inches off the floor with head lolling and mouth hanging open.[31]

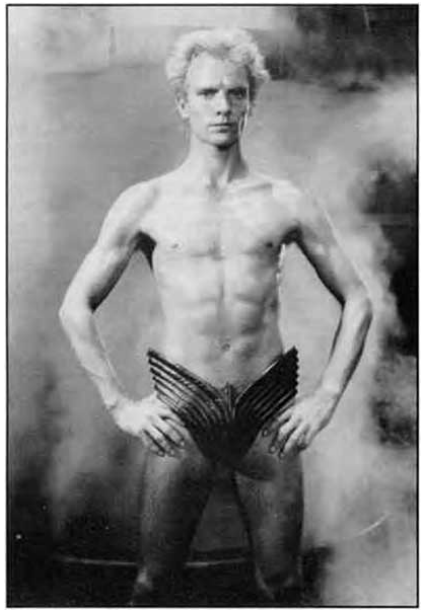
But the worst travesty to the ending—and the greatest perversion of the source text—occurs in the last few seconds of the film. Paul Atreides, triumphant warrior and hero, becomes a god and uses his powers to bring *rain* to the parched world of Arrakis. Ignoring all Frank Herbert's careful ecological world-building, overlooking the fact that water is actually poisonous to sandworms (dozens of which have been gathered onto the surface of the battlefield), the filmmakers insist on giving the film an "exclamation point" ending, one where the triumphant hero sets all things right—if Dune is a desert world, suffering from thirst, Paul will bring a downpour of rain to the desert.

By having it rain on Dune, Lynch and the De Laurentiis thoroughly discard Herbert's text and fashion their own, deviant version of the story. There are many faults in the adaptation of *Dune*, but this is unquestionably the worst. Even Frank Herbert, who was otherwise quite forgiving of the film's alterations, singled out this event to criticize: "Paul was a man *playing* god, not a god who could make it rain."[32]

The film's final scenes of rain pouring on grateful Fremen are completely incompatible with Herbert's carefu11y constructed ecology. These scenes exist only to provide definitive closure to the story and hint that the producers of *Dune* were so desperate to make the film palatable to a general audience they were willing to forego any continuity with the rest of the Herbert's books—continuity they seem overly committed to earlier in the film.

Conclusion: *Dune*, Done

The poorly developed climax of *Dune* underscores how the adaptation was often mismanaged. Unsure of which elements from the book to include or discard, incapable of developing either a thorough adaptation or a streamlined version, and determined to make the film a foundation for a series, the makers of *Dune* found themselves in a no-win situation. Despite their best efforts, the unwieldy Dune adaptation could not be all things to all people. Eventually the film collapsed under its own weight and pretensions.



Feyd-Rautha of House Harkonnen (Sting)

For the *Dune* aficionado, the film took too many liberties with the source material. By adding the weirding modules and the rain, marginalizing the Fremen and Jessica, and failing to make the planet. Dune, a vast and palpable world, the filmmakers removed much of the story's vibrancy.

For the general audience, (i.e., those viewers with no, or only passing, knowledge of the book), the film failed because of sloppy editing and reliance on extensive, information-laden voice-over. In addition, the film erodes as it progresses, losing rich texture and nuance to all-out-action and B-movie material.

For all his skill and talent as a filmmaker, David Lynch was probably not suited to the task of bringing *Dune* to the screen, at least in the way the De Laurentiis intended. Frank Herbert's complex and demanding narrative required a director with the discipline to rigorously follow a script, and the adaptation of *Dune* needed someone who could precisely construct a film based on the work of another. Lynch's attitude about scripts and filmmaking clash with this type of approach. In *The Making of Dune*, Lynch explains his philosophy: "The script is like a skeleton. You can rely

on it. If it works in the script, then you have a certain leeway to play with things….I like things under control, but I still realize—maybe now more than ever—that I cannot work being locked into a script or story."[33] These comments clearly Indicate Lynch's preference for following his own path.

Despite his enormous artistic ability, Lynch was merely a hired hand on *Dune*—a director chosen by the De Laurentiis for his ability to bring unique images to the screen, not for his predilections to improvise or experiment. Lynch knew he was making the film for the producers. In an interview with David Breskin, Lynch explains. "I got strong indications from Raffaella and Dino De Laurentiis of what kind of film they expected, and I knew I didn't have final cut. And little by little…every decision was always made with them in mind and their sort of film."[34] Lynch won some battles over how the film would look (he successfully fought to keep the "folding space" sequence), but he lost critical battles regarding the direction of the story and the pacing and placement of scenes—in short, the overall construction of the film.

It's impossible to know how Dune would have turned out had Lynch been given control of the final cut. The director hinted at what his *Dune* might have looked like after the rough cut had been assembled: "I sort of like the European way of filmmaking. I like films like *2001*, too. I like long scenes. I like silences. Stuff like that. It's going to be really hard for me to get the movie I really see there into two and a half hours."[35] While Lynch's film would probably have deviated greatly from the source text, the result might have been a more appealing (albeit abstract) film that demanded viewers supply their own interpretations rather than one that spelled everything out for them. Dune could have resembled other great science fiction films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In such a scenario, viewers of Lynch's *Dune*, like those of *2001*, could always refer to the written version of the story (the novel) for answers to esoteric and indefinite concepts.

Such a film was not to be. Producers Dino and Raffaella De Laurentiis envisioned *Dune* as a Hollywood blockbuster, one that, despite it source material, still fell into the formulaic science fiction genre.

David Lynch was not—and has never been—a "Hollywood" director. *Eraserhead* and *Elephant Man* were not commercial films: they were independent visions of an auteur. Because the De Laurentiis had control over the project, Lynch was prohibited from making *Dune* the way he envisioned.

Despite the enormous amount of money, talent, and craftsmanship that went into it. *Dune* remained an ill-defined concept throughout its production. Ceaselessly oscillating between faithful adaptation and generic Hollywood film. *Dune* never became a focused, clarified project. Instead, as David Lynch has so aptly observed, *Dune* became (and will always remain) a film "halfway there, and halfway not."

Beyond *Dune*: Past, Present, and Future

Although the film version of *Dune* is many years past, the world of Frank Herbert's novel continues to manifest itself in games, books, and other media.

In late 1997. Last Unicorn Games and Five Rings Publishing Group released a *Dune* collectible card game entitled. "Dune: Eye of the Storm." The game is based on much of Frank Herbert's work, including later books in the *Dune* series. Interestingly, much of the artistic design of the game is derived from the production design of David Lynch's film. Character depictions of Paul and Duke Leto closely resemble the MacLachlan and Prochnow characters (although many other characters featured in the game are of original design). Other cards in the game are directly based on scenes from the film (for example, see the "Harkonnen Industries" card, the "Sandworm" card, or the "Arclight Assault" card).

Frank Herbert's *Dune* saga comprises six books *(Dune, Dune Messiah,*

Children of Dune, God Emperor of Dune, Heretics of Dune and *Chapterhouse Dune*), but three new novels have recently been announced. The three books will be prequels to *Dune* and will be written by Brian Herbert (Frank Herbert's son) and Kevin J. Anderson. The new books are based on notes left behind by Frank Herbert after his death and are tentatively titled *House Atreides, House Harkonnen*, and *The Great Spice War*. No release date on any of these books has been set.

Finally, a new adaptation of *Dune* is in development. The Sci-Fi Channel and ABC network are currently working on a six-hour miniseries version of *Dune* for television. So far, there is no word on casting or airdate.

Meanwhile, for those readers interesting in finding out more about David Lynch's version of *Dune*, we offer the following reading list. Many of these books and essays were invaluable in the writing this issue's *Dune* article.

A *Dune* Reading List

Books:

John Alexander, *The Films of David Lynch* (Charles Letts and Co. Ltd., 1993)

Michael Chion, *David Lynch* (British Film Institute, 1995)

Frank Herbert, *Eye* (Byron Preiss Visual Publications, 1985; Ace paperback edition, 1987)

Kenneth C. Kaleta, *David Lynch* (Twayne Publishers, 1993)

Ed Naha, *The Making of Dune* (Berkley Books, 1984)

Martha Nochimson, *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood* (University of Texas Press, 1997)

Chris Rodley (editor), *Lynch on Lynch* (Faber and Faber, 1997)

Essays, Articles, and Interviews:

David Breskin, "David Lynch" (Interview with David Lynch). *Inner Views* (Faber and Faber, 1992)

Harlan Ellison, "Installment 9: In Which the Fortunate Reader Gets to Peak Inside the Fabled Black Tower." *Harlan Ellison's Watching* (Underwood Miller, 1989: originally published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, June 1985)

Harlan Ellison, "Installment 10: In Which the Fabled Black Tower Meets Dune with as Much Affection as Godzilla Met Ghidrah." *Harlan Ellison's Watching Fiction*, August 1985)

Elisabeth and Michael Liddell, "Dune: A Tale of Two Texts." In *Cinema and Fiction: New Modes of Adapting*, edited by John Orr and Colin Nicholson (Edinburgh University Press, 1992)

Randy & Jean-Marc Lofficier, "Kyle MacLachlan: The Young Messiah of Dune." *Starlog* 89, December 1984

Paul Mandell, "David Lynch: Director of 'Dune'" (Interview with Lynch). *Starlog* 87, October 1984

Sean Murphy, "Building the Perfect Dune," *Video Watchdog* 33 & *34*, 1996

Janine Pourroy and Don Shay (editors), "The Shape of Dune." *Cinefex* 21, April 1985 Paul M. Sammon.

"David Lynch's Dune," *Cinefantaslique* Vol. 4. #4/5, September 1984

James Vemiere, "David Lynch: American Primitive" (Interview with

Lynch). *The Twilight Zone Magazine*. Vol. 8. #4, October 1988

David Foster Wallace, "David Lynch Keeps His Head." *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* (Little. Brown & Co., 1997)

Notes

1Ed Naha, *The Making of Dune* (Berkley Books. 1984). p. 24.

2Colin Manlove, *Science Fiction: Ten Explorations* (Kent State University Press. 1986). p. 79.

3Lorenzo DiTommaso, "History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's Dune." *Science Fiction Studies*. Volume 19 (1992). p. 313.

4Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (Methuen. 983). p. 76.

5Frank Herbert, Dune (Ace, 1990). pp. 10-11.

6Michael Chion, *David Lynch* (British Film Institute. 1995). p. 71. (Despite Chion's observation, he still believes Lynch's experimentation with inner voice was something that "greatly enriched [cinema].")

7Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Cornell University Press. 1990). p. 159.

8Herbert, p. 199.

9David Lynch, *Dune* Screenplay (1983).

10Chion, p. 68.

11Elisabeth and Michael Liddell, "Dune: A Tale of Two Texts." in *Cinema and Fiction: New Modes of Adapting*, edited by John Orr and Colin Nicholson (Edinburgh University Press. 1992). p. 135.

12Herbert, p. 254-255.

13Herbert, p. 306.

14Martha Nochimson, *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood* (University of Texas Press. 1997), p. 130.

15Naha, p. 54.

16Ibid., p. 254.

17It's especially ironic that this element would be downplayed in a film by a director

acutely aware of the relationship between an environment and it's effect on people. We could also note that Lynch's most famous project is named after its location: *Twin Peaks*, and TP co-creator Mark Frost once considered writing a *Peaks* novel that included information about "the strange electromagnetic force that grew up between the mountains and how it oddly affected all the people in the area." (*Wrapped in Plastic* 9. p. 4)

18Herbert, p. 262.

19Naha. p. 86.

20Ibid., p. 254.

21Janine Pourroy and Don Shay (editors), "The Shape of Dune." *Cinefex* 21 (April 1985). p. 30.

22"Herbert, p. 121.

23Pourroy and Shay, p. 29.

24Ibid., p. 50.

25For readers interested in a thorough comparison of the theatrical *Dune* to the TV *Dune*, see Sean Murphy's analysis in *Video Watchdog* 33 and 34. 1996.

26David Foster Wallace, "David Lynch Keeps His Head." *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* (Little, Brown & Co., 1997), p. 152.

27Kenneth C. Kaleta, *David Lynch* (Twayne Publishers, 1993), p. 84.

28Chris Rodley (editor), *Lynch on Lynch* (Faber and Faber. 1997). p. 116.

29Pourroy and Shay, p. 66. (The fading in and out of Irulan's face seems a deliberate effort to convey either the power of the spice or the sweep of the story, but actually occurs because parts of a longer introductory speech were removed. The fade-outs cover the edits.)

30David Breskin. "David Lynch." *Inner Views* (Faber and Faber. 1992). p. 64.

31Herbert, p. 463.

32Frank Herbert, Eye (Ace. 1987), p. 12.

33Naha, p. 232.

34Breskin, p. 63.

35Naha. p. 231.

Dune (1985) - Costumes

DVD Extra from Dune: Extended Edition (2006)
©2005 Universal Studios.
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Bob Ringwood—Costume Designer
Debbie Phipps—Assistant Cutter.
Michael Jones—"Milliner"
Mark Siegel—Suit Head of Construction

Ringwood: We had I think in the end about four months to produce just under 8,000 or 9,000 costumes.

Phipps: There were certainly times when the workload was very heavy—I mean I can remember working through the night on several occasions to get costumes ready for the next morning for the shooting, and literally I'd still be stitching on beads and bits of braid and right up to the last moment as it was being sort of taken out of the door.

Ringwood: It was a nightmare and great fun. The clothes for even principal characters were often done at a very last minute and had

to be sort of improvised out of anything that was around.

Jones: The [Harkonnen troops - misidentified as Sardaukar], for instance—they wore these specific type of mask with this breathing apparatus on. The actual breathing apparatus was car hoses—anything we could find.

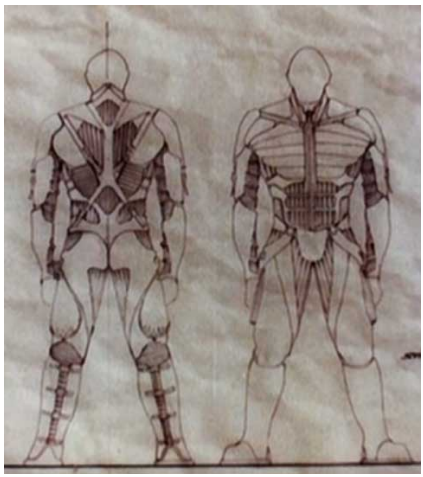
Ringwood: Everyone thinks that movies are prepared for months—it's all carefully thought about. Often it's just off the top of your head to the last minute in whatever time you can get it done in.

The scene where Sting wears that winged jockstrap—that was slated to be shot nude and Sting agreed to do a nude, but the studio at the last minute panicked and thought they couldn't have Sting in the nude, so literally I think at midnight the night before they rang me

up and said you've got to put him in something, so we made this winged g-string thing, and so it was ready the next morning for him to shoot in so he wouldn't be actually nude.

The Guild navigators look very sinister and strange, and the reason they look sinister and strange is that the San Diego Fire Department was tearing down one of its old fire stations, and at the back they'd found all these 19—I think they were actually 20s 30s and 40s body bags—used body bags—and they were large canvas tarpaulins with all these cross-banded webbing straps on, and they were painted with tar, and when we undid did them there were bits of bodies—not actual bits of bodies, but, you know, fluids—and they weren't very pleasant. I didn't tell them till they'd finished that they were actually used body bags.

The Baron's wear was always all based on industrial wear or a protective industrial wear because I figured that that was a polluted-environmental place. It was essential that Kenneth McMillan looked heavy, and he was a well-built man but he was, I would say he was under 200 pounds, and we had to make him look as though he was 500 pounds. When Kevin put it on he couldn't stand up, I mean it was too much weight for him to stand up, so we had a harness built underneath and we made a metal a-frame and he was wheeled around the studio to do shots and hooked onto his flying wire so he never stood up in that suit ever. He was always hanging in it. It was very funny.



One of the most interesting things about designing Dune was the solving the still suit. The still suit is the essential thing of the movie and to me it seemed that it should have a sort of futuristic Aboriginal quality, so they were almost tribal. Every single suit was handmade

Siegel: He had to do body casts from which we made fiberglass forms and then from there we would draw the pattern in chalk on the unitard and start cutting from the patterns of each foam rubber section, laid them on one by one until we got all the understructure built including the tubing. We would brush coat it then with a thick latex, and then spray coat it with another thinner latex for a final seal, and at that point put it in an oven where it would just kind of help the latex dry.

Ringwood: The women had to obviously have breasts rather than pecs, and so I did a female version. We did children's versions of it, too.

Siegel: They were really quite comfortable, until of course you got them out in the hot sun in the desert at 110 degrees and started running around and fighting battles and sweating in them. I think down in Mexico they would call them the death suits.

Ringwood: Max von Sydow was standing there in the desert, hot, and his fingertips were dripping sweat, and I asked him if he was comfortable and was it all okay, and he said no, it's absolute hell, but he looked so good I'll put up with it. That's how they felt about it—all the men had the body they'd never had—they've got muscles suddenly, so they loved it. And I was determined that the still suit was going to be very sexy.

There were a lot of sexy clothes in that movie that never hit the screen. Francesca wore a wonderful night dress—it was dripping in sort of squares and and dissolved into silk and you could see her body, but I mean you know she was shot covered in a cheap cotton sheet and I could have killed everybody

Phipps: A lot of the work that we did, you just don't see. There were costumes that we made which didn't even make it onto the screen.

Ringwood: We made 2,000 costumes with hats.

Jones: David decided he didn't want the Fremen to have these headdresses so they never appeared.

Phipps: You put all this work into it and a fraction shows, but I think overall you can tell the richness, that there was a lot of work there, so I feel very proud that I worked on this.

The SandRider interviews Norman Spinrad about Frank Herbert & *Dune*

January 2009

SandRider: Would you talk briefly about the very first and very last time you spoke with Frank Herbert?

Norman Spinrad: I don't really remember when I first spoke with Frank. I think the last time was in a car somewhere, where Frank told me about being in another car with Dino De Laurentis. According to Frank, Dino asked him to try to write the screenplay to the DUNE movie. Frank told him screenplays weren't his thing, he didn't think he could do it.

Dino says "I'll give you a million dollars to try."

Frank: "You talked me into it."

Then Frank tried, the screenplay was no good, and he said to Dino: "See, I told you."

This is me now, not the story Frank told me then, except he did go on about being supportive of Lynch's screenplay, and I think because he himself had failed to adapt the novel.

SR: Is there a non-DUNE Herbert book that you think is "better" or "more important" than his most popular and widely-read work?

NS: I don't like "better" or "more important" as categories, but I would say that THE SANTAROGA BARRIER is arguably Frank's best novel on a literary level.

SR: You've written that DUNE has become "the template for a generation and more of imitative works, including all too many sequels by Herbert himself. " Where do you think Frank should have ended the DUNE storyline? Or, what seemed to you to be the natural ending point that he exceeded?

NS: The third DUNE novel should have been the last one. Frank told me that when he started, he actually wanted to write one huge novel, and thought it out that way. Publishing reality mandated it be published in thirds. After than, it was mostly about money, offers he couldn't refuse.

SR: I've always thought DUNE could have stood alone, on its own. Certainly the "story" of the Golden Path was completed at the end of GOD-EMPEROR, when Leto II is "returned to the sand". What did you make of very open-ended conclusion to CHAPTERHOUSE: DUNE?

NS: Well DUNE, the first volume, left some things in midair. DUNE MESSIAH was book 2, right, CHILDREN book 3, could have ended after book 2, but publishers always want at least a trilogy. There's a story, I only heard second hand, that Lester del Rey rewrote the ending of 2, or persuaded Frank to do it, so that a third book would be possible.

SR: Do you believe Frank had intentions of a "Dune7"? Along the same lines, what do think of the claim of Brian Herbert to have found floppy disks containing the "complete" Dune7 outline in a safety deposit box years after Frank's death? If there were notes, do you believe Brian and Kevin J. Anderson used them faithfully in their new "Dune" books?

NS: Maybe. Frank kept going as long as the big money kept rolling in. Knowing Frank's political philosophy, I once asked him how he could keep writing this royalist stuff. He told me he planned to end the series with a novel that would transition to a fictional universe of democratic rule. Never wrote it, of course. And Brian and Kevin certainly didn't from any 7 notes.

SR: Now that Brian and Anderson's new book "Paul of Dune" is set in between DUNE and DUNE MESSIAH, not just a sequel or a prequel, but an "interquel" if you will, do you think Frank Herbert's Dune Legacy is in danger? Will these new books "devalue" the DUNE trademark and so taint Frank's literary Legacy?

NS: Who knows? In the long run, it depends on the critics, readers, and publishers. One thing Brian and Kevin can't ever do is put the

byline "by Frank Herbert" on their stuff. That "Dune" is now a trademark I find disgusting, and the more it is devalued, the better. That trademark has little or nothing to do with Frank Herbert's literary legacy.

SR: At this point, Peter Berg is set to direct the next film adaption of DUNE. He has stressed the "ecological" theme of the book. I know you have an opinion on that. How has Berg missed the point, of DUNE being a primarily "ecology-themed" novel?

NS: I don't like judging a film that hasn't even been shot. But certainly DUNE is not primarily an ecology-themed novel. Indeed, with the depicted ecology of Arrakis consisting of the Worms, the Spice, and humans, it's hardly a novel with ecologial sophistication on a scientific level. I think those who try to see or play it that way do so because the truth is so dangerous–namely that DUNE is centrally about chemically enhanced states of consciousness, and while balanced, is not negative about it. In THE SANTAROGA BARRIER, Frank confronts this head-on, and no way anyone can pretend it's about something else.

SR: Have you read Brian Herbert's biography of Frank, DREAMER OF DUNE?

NS: I don't have that strong a stomach.

DUNE Introduction by Norman Spinrad

Frank Herbert's DUNE is one of the four most culturally-influential science fiction novels ever written, the other three being Aldous Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, George Orwell's 1984, and Robert A. Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND.

Of these four novels, DUNE is the longest, most complex, the deepest by far, arguably the most successful on a literary level, certainly the most culturally important, and yet the least understood by critical establishments, both genre and general.

BRAVE NEW WORLD, published way back in 1932, became the template for the science fictional dystopia, particularly of the "Friendly Fascism" variety wherein the dystopian reality emerges from a superficially utopian surface, but read now seems stilted, schematic, and amateurish; inferior, in fact, to Huxley's own later science fiction.

1984 is much more skillfully written, far more politically and psychologically sophisticated, a classic that remains literarily valid long after its political relevance has faded, written by a so-called "mainstream" writer, who, unlike Huxley, wrote no other significant science fiction.

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was written by an acknowledged master of science fiction who never wrote anything else of significance, but it is not Heinlein's best novel any more than BRAVE NEW WORLD is Huxley's. Structurally, it breaks in half rather clumsily, on a stylistic level it is inferior to THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. It has become Heinlein's sigil novel largely because of its centrality to the evolution of the Counterculture born in the 1960s and its unfortunate notoriety as the novel that inspired the discorporative depredations of Charles Manson and his "Family."

DUNE, as a cultural icon, partakes of some of the aspects of all three of the other books, but is something much more. Like BRAVE NEW WORLD, it has become the template for a generation and more of imitative works, including all too many sequels by Herbert himself. Like 1984, it is a novel written on a level of sophistication that will preserve it as a literally classic long after its cultural relevance has faded.

And like STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND only more so, DUNE was a formative literary factor in the cultural revolution of the 1960s, and in a much more positive manner, which is why it is so generally and deliberately misread as a novel centered on "ecological" issues.

The truth is far more complex and, even today, far more politically incorrect, and therefore still far more politically dangerous. After

thirty years and more and millions of copies sold, it is hard to realize that back in the early 1960s this now famous and best-selling classic had a difficult time getting published. And it so happens that I was around for part of the story.

DUNE was first published in Analog, John W. Campbell, Jr.'s magazine, as two separate "novels" in serial form. "Dune World" was serialized in 1963-64, and "The Prophet of Dune" in 1965, though as Frank Herbert told me in personal conversation much later, DUNE had always been conceived and written as one novel.

And indeed, as an avid reader of each installment of the "Dune World" serialization as a young writer just starting out, I was deeply disappointed, not to say outraged, by the way the last installment seemed to end in mid-air. By the time Analog began to serialize "The Prophet of Dune," I was being published in the magazine myself. But I was still an avid reader of the serialization. And I was working at the Scott Meredith literary agency, which was trying to place the novel with a publisher.Despite the success of the serialization, this wasn't easy, and the literary agency finally had to settle for selling the American trade edition rights for a small advance to Chilton, an obscure house, who brought out the hardcover in 1965 in a very modest printing.

Only later, when Ace Books reprinted DUNE in paperback, did it begin to slowly gather momentum to become the long-term best-seller that we know it as today.

Why this difficult publishing history of a novel that was to become an enormous commercial success over time? The answer must be sought within the pages of DUNE itself. And understood within the context of the times in which it was written and published.

In superficial plot outline, the story of DUNE seems not only simple but something of a derivative cliche.

Due in part to the machinations of the Harkonnen clan and its evil leader Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, the Padishah Emperor, ruler of the human interstellar empire, banishes the hereditary enemy of the

Harkonnens, the Atreides clan, led by Duke Leto Atreides, to rule the desert planet Arrakis.

Bereft of any other significant economic interest, Arrakis is the sole source of the "spice" melange, the psychoactive drug that allows the navigators of the Spacing Guild to move their starships faster than light through a form of hyperspace and thus maintain the coherence of this unlikely pseudo-medieval interstellar culture.

It's all a Harkonnen set-up, in collaboration with the Emperor, to destroy the Atreides and gain control of Arrakis and the spice themselves.

Unrest is fomented, Harkonnen mercenaries arrive, a war starts, Leto is assassinated, the Harkonnens take over, and his heir Paul, along with the boy's mother Jessica, flee into the wilds of the deep desert.

There they are taken in by the Fremen, a Bedouin-like tribe battling the oppressive rule of the Harkonnens. Through a series of feats, rituals, initiations, and battles, young Paul becomes the leader of the Fremen, turns them into a People's Liberation Army, and eventually not only reclaims his rightful throne but becomes Emperor himself and a kind of God-King of this fictional universe.

An oft-told story?
Yes.
Derivative?
Yes?
A cliche?
No.
Simple?
Not at all.

For what we have here in outline is Frank Herbert's version of what Joseph Campbell argues is the basic human story in his landmark work of mythic analysis and literary comparative cultural anthropology, THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES.

The Hero (Paul) is dispossessed of his rightful heritage (Leto's throne) by the forces of evil (the Harkonnens) and must flee into the wilderness(the Arakeen desert). There he encounters his spiritual guide and master who educates him in mystical and practical lore. Interestingly enough, as we shall see later, in DUNE, Herbert divides this archetype into three masters, one for each level of knowledge: Duncan Idaho, his warrior sensei; the Mentat Thufir Hawat, his mentor in things tactical and intellectual; and his mother the Bene Gesserit adept Jessica, his guide to the things of the spirit and mystical vision.

There in the primal wilderness he also undergoes spiritual and physical testing and initiations, proves his worth, and gathers loyal followers and allies (the Fremen).

He descends into the Underworld, the place of the dead, the world of spiritual and moral darkness, where he undergoes the ultimate testing, triumphs, and returns to the world of men as the liberating Lightbringer.

Whether this is the main human template myth may be arguable, whether this is even the main Western mythic template somewhat less arguable, but that this generalized tale of The Hero With a Thousand Faces is the structure and inner reality of everything from the New Testament to Tarzan, from THE STARS MY DESTINATION to SIDDHARTHA, from the various tellings and retellings of the King Arthur cycle to the myths of Gilgamesh and Barbarossa, to endless samurai epics and much of Shakespeare, as well as DUNE, certainly is not.

So DUNE's superficially simple and derivative story line is not a cliche but the retelling of one of humanity's deepest and most powerful myths. Deep and powerful because it is the story of ourselves as we would like to be. Our adolescent selves identify with the young Paul because we all, one way or another, feel deprived of our rightful place at the center of the world. We all seek to escape from the usurping forces of repression into the wilderness of self-discovery where we will perform feats that will allow us to return to the seat of power and triumphantly confront the oppressors as the darling of destiny.

On this level, the tale can, and all-too-often has, become a psychologically fascist power fantasy; in fiction, and worse still, in the real world.

And this seductive appeal to egoistic power fantasies is certainly strong in DUNE, particularly to adolescents, most particularly to male adolescents, which partially explains the popularity of Frank Herbert's novel, and almost entirely explains the popularity of the imitative "science fantasy" that was to follow.

But on a deeper level, the level Joseph Campbell addresses, and a level that is fully present in DUNE, the ultimate adversary that the true hero (as opposed to the barbarian with a broadsword or the space cadet with a blaster) confronts in the nethermost pit of the moral and spiritual underworld is himself. The egoistic power-tripping self of the superficial level of the story.

And the climactic battle, the ultimate test, is a spiritual and moral one, between these two aspects of the hero; the false and the true, the merely physical and the mystical, the warrior and the man of knowledge, and what emerges to champion the cause of the people if the hero is successful is not merely an irresistible warrior, but a true Lightbringer, an Enlightened One, a Bodhisattva.

What makes DUNE such a unique and powerful retelling of the myth of The Hero With A Thousand Faces is that Paul, however imperfectly, understands this very dichotomy early on, and struggles with it, however ambiguously, throughout the bulk of the novel.

And in the end, what can be read as the ultimate triumph on one level can be read as tragedy on the other. And that is the level upon which Paul Atreides, become Muab'dib, become the Kwisatz Haderach and Padishah Emperor, sees it. His prescient vision may make him God-King of this fictional universe, but he cannot escape from the deterministic destiny thereof and the jihad he will bring, the jihad he has spent so much of the novel trying to prevent.

This is what is thematically and mystically and dramatically and psychologically central to DUNE and not "ecology." This is the visionary core of this long, complex, often-discursive, multileveled

novel. This is what makes it a literary classic.

And this, in the context of its time, explains why a science fiction novel serialized in eight parts in a genre magazine, first published in small printing by a minor house and then modestly reprinted by a genre publisher in paperback, could become a culturally-influential book in a much wider context and, over time, a best-seller.

The so-called ecological theme of DUNE does not stand up to serious scrutiny because the ecology of Herbert's fictional Arrakis is extremely simplified and unrealistically schematic. Arrakis is a vast planetary desert, its ecospheres only varying somewhat in degree of dessication, and indeed the main native food chain seems to consist of only two organisms–the tiny ones that produce the raw material of the "spice" and the huge Sandworms which graze upon them and convert it into the precious melange.

It is the melange, in effect Sandworm droppings, upon which the wealth of Arrakis, and indeed the existence of the novel's interstellar empire, entirely depends. It is the melange for which the Atreides and the Harkonnens contend. It is the melange which is the center of the Fremen culture and religion. It is the melange which will eventually transform Paul Atreides into the Kwisatz Haderach, the prescient being who can see into levels of reality to which all others are blind. The melange which turns a boy and then a guerrilla leader into a kind of god.

And though melange is referred to throughout the novel as a "spice" and consumed in small quantities as such, that is not what it really is at all.

What it really is is that which could hardly speak its name in clear in the science fiction of the early 1960s, which explains why the book was such a hard sell to publishers in 1964 and 1965 even with the terminological obfuscation. Which also explains why it became a best-seller after the cultural transformations of 1967 once it was published and why it was one of the engines of those transformations.

Melange is not a fictional "spice."
Melange is a fictional psychedelic drug.
Its effects are similar to those of LSD or mescaline or peyote.
Only much more powerful.

DUNE, therefore, is not primarily a novel thematically centered on ecology. It is centrally a novel exploring chemically enhanced states of consciousness and their effects not only on individual personality and spirit but on culture.

One of the very first.
And, after all these years, still one of the most profound.

Melange, in even small continuous doses, is addictive, turns the sclera of the eyeballs blue, has milder psychedelic effects than LSD, and, like the peyote of the American southwestern desert, an integrated sacrament of the Native American religion, is thoroughly incorporated into the culture and religion of the Fremen.

On the level of the interstellar culture, it is taken in much stronger doses by the Navigators of the Spacing Guild, who use it to attain extreme states of altered consciousness which allow them to pilot starships through a form of hyperspace, turning them into transhuman beings as part of the existential bargain.

The Bene Geserit female adepts use it for more visionary purposes, and dream of creating and/or finding the "Kwisatz Haderach," a male capable of handling the spice on the highest level, whose consciousness will be freed thereby from conventionally perceived space and time into a kind of Einsteinian four-dimensional viewpoint which will enable him to see "the future" presciently, or, more subtly and profoundly, to surf the geodesics of probability.

Thus Herbert portrays four levels of both the use of psycho-active drugs by a society and the corresponding levels of consciousness. The Fremen incorporate melange as the sacrament of a tribal religion. The Guild Navigators employ it as a pragmatic technological augment. The Bene Gesserit use it in vision quests and mind-melding sessions.

Paul Atreides passes through these three ascending stages on his way to finally employing the drug to achieve the ultimate level, to become the Kwisatz Haderach, the fully Enlightened One, able to view the conventional realm of space and time from the outside, as Einsteinian four-space, a consciousness rendered therefore prescient up to a point, an Enlightenment that turns out to be both a godlike power and a tragic curse.

All this is set in a culture which is anachronistically archaic in a manner which is both rather too familiar and yet interestingly strange.

Stretching disbelief and contorting technological logic by staging swordfights in a space-going technology capable of using atomic weapons and inflicting an improbable monarchical political system upon it for the purpose of setting a pseudo-medieval action-adventure story on alien planets is hardly Frank Herbert's invention, and these fictional swords-and-spaceships cultures are almost always implicitly Christian and more or less Catholic.

In DUNE too, we have an Emperor and noble vassals and a hierarchical feudal system with a theocratic underpinning. But it is not Catholic or even Christian.

Although the word "Islam" never even appears in the novel and you have to be rather conversant with the real-world referents to get it, the religious template in DUNE is Islamic, not Christian, more Eastern than Western.

The term "Padishah Emperor" certainly points to Herbert's deliberate decision to do this, since "Shah padi Shah" means "King of Kings" in Farsi, the language of the Islamic Persian Empire.

Nor is it going too far to suppose that the grudge-nursing Fremen, exiled on Arrakis after a long and complex interstellar hegira, are cognates of the minority Shi'ite followers of Ali persecuted and reviled by dominant Sunni cultures.

And the visionary Bene Gesserit have their similarities to the mystic Sufis, Muslims who claim their sect predates Islam, and who emphasize techniques designed to induce direct mystical experience

and insight, rather than ritual, rules, or a belief system.

Why Frank Herbert chose Islam as the religious and mystical underpinning of an interstellar culture that is otherwise based on that of medieval, feudal, Catholic Europe, is perhaps beyond the scope of literary analysis, a choice made somewhere in the deep subconscious regions from which artistic creation arises.

However, one can speculate…

While Islam is generally grouped with Judaism and Christianity, the monotheistic religions out of which it arose, there is one fundamental difference between Islam and its direct predecessors.

Judaism began as a tribal religion centrally concerned with the relationship between the history of the Jews and their God and its Bible was written by diverse hands over a long period of time. Christianity converted Judaism into a proselytizing universalist religion based on the story of one transhuman figure, Jesus Christ, its Bible was written in a much shorter period of time in four alternate versions (not unlike Lawrence Durrell's ALEXANDRIA QUARTET), it is basically a biography of Jesus, and its central concerns are sin, redemption, and morality.

Islam too began as a tribal religion, that of the Arabs, and was transformed into a proselytizing universalist religion, and its holy book, the Koran, is also filled with rules and regulations.

But the Koran, unlike either Testament of the Judeo-Christian Bible, was created by one man, Mohammed, over a very short period of time in historical terms; directly dictated to him by Allah, if you are a believer, and certainly in the throes of some powerful mystical and visionary experience even if you are not, since Mohammed was an illiterate who had never created a literary work before.

Thus Islam, unlike Judaism or Christianity, but like Buddhism, has as its core one man's mystical and visionary awakening experience. And Mohammed, liked Buddha, made no pretense of being the Godhead, merely (if that can be the word)of directly experiencing it.

The transcendent goal of Christianity is individual immortality in a vaguely described but rather concrete heaven, to be achieved by following the rules. Thus it is basically a religion of morality.

The transcendent goal of Buddhism is the achievement of Nirvana, the ecstatic reintegration of the individual spirit with the universal Godhead from which it arose, to be achieved by meditative techniques. Thus Buddhism is an experiential religion, whose goal is achieving a transhuman state of consciousness.

Islam stands somewhere between. The Koran is as full of moral and legalistic prescriptions as the Bible, but it was written by one man in a state of mystically transcendent consciousness.

And the "heaven" of Islam, salaciously misunderstood by many, including many Muslims, is described as a state of continuous orgasm, which, seen on a mystic level, is a state of transcendent consciousness not unlike the Buddhist Nirvana.

Which perhaps explains why the Sufis, an older and thoroughly experiential religion, aimed entirely at achieving such states by ecstatic dancing, drugs, and other such means of transforming consciousness, could become an aspect of Islam and be generally accepted as such by the mainstream thereof.

And why alcohol, a drug not known for its psychedelic effects, is far more acceptable in Christian cultures than marijuana and hashish, which are far more acceptable in traditional Islamic cultures than alcohol.

Which may explain why Frank Herbert chose to employ Islamic mystical and religious referents in a novel whose central themes are the cultural, psychological, and religions relationships between a psychedelic drug and the societies based upon it, and the stepwise visionary transformation of a young boy's consciousness by the use thereof into the transcendent consciousness of a "Kwisatz Haderach," a being so enlightened that in the end he can even perceive the ironic tragedy of his own prescience.

Which certainly goes a long way towards explaining why DUNE could not find a major American publisher, inside the science fiction or in the mainstream, in the early 1960s, before there was anything like the Counterculture it helped to create.

And why it eventually became a long-term best-seller after the evolutionary changes in the consciousness of a generation it did so much to catalyze.

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND may have been the model, for better and for worse, for much of the hippie life-style–communes centered around a charismatic guru, an alternate life-style including free sexuality, and in the unfortunate case of the Manson Family, a glib moral rationalization for the discorporation of inconvenient people–but DUNE did something much more profound.

Reading DUNE can actually transform your consciousness in a positive manner. It can elevate your spirit. It can take you on a fictional "psychedelic trip," can induce a visionary experience that stays with you, from which, in some small or not so small way, you might emerge as something of a Lightbringer yourself.

A large claim for a science fiction novel?
To be sure.

But if you are reading this, you have the book in your hand, and the opportunity to see for yourself that DUNE is an empowering novel.

I can only send you on your way to that experience with the testimony of my own, published as a part of my autobiography in the Gale Press CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SERIES.

Here I describe my decision as a 25-year-old who had published about four stories and who had had a near-death experience in a hospital two years previously to leave New York for California:

"And California, San Francisco in particular, for me, like so many others, was the mythical Golden West towards which Young Men were supposed to go, the land with no winter, North Beach, the Sunset end of the Road, the object of a thousand and one vision quests, the Future

itself, somehow, the glorious leap into the Great Unknown.

Appropriately enough, Frank Herbert and about 300 mg of mescaline sent me on my way….

Walking west through the Village night on 4th Street, peaking on mescaline after reading the final installment of the magazine serialization of DUNE, a powerful meditation on space-time, pre-cognition, and destiny soon to launch a hundred thousand trips, I had a flash-forward of my own.

I would be a famous science fiction writer, I would publish many stories and novels, and many of the people who were my literary idols, inspirations, and role-models, and former clients, people I had never met, would come to accept me as their equal, as their ally, as their friend.

And my life's mission, would be to take this commercial science fiction genre and turn it into something else somehow, write works that transcended its commercial parameters….that would help to open a new Way….

This is what you're here for. This is why you passed through the fever's fire and didn't die in that hospital bed. This is what you must do. You must go West to meet your future.

The mescaline talking? An overdose of 25-year-old ego? A stoned out ego-tripping wish-fulfillment fantasy?

Call it what you will.
Everything I saw in that timeless Einsteinian moment would come to pass."

That was my description of the prescient DUNE-inspired vision of my 25-year-old self. Here is the present tense:

"And when I'm really feeling down, I remember a 25-year-old kid stoned on mescaline, walking across 4th Street to the Village, high on DUNE, and dreaming those crazy prescient dreams….

He was going to be a famous science fiction writer, he would publish many stories and novels, and the many of the people who were his literary idols, inspirations, and role-models would accept him as their equal, would become his allies, his friends.

And his life's mission would be to take this commercial science fiction genre and turn it into something else somehow, write works that transcended its commercial parameters, works…that would open a new Way….

This is what you're here for.
And so I was. And so I am."

One of the many epithets attached in the novel to Paul Atreides, Muab'dib, Kwisatz Haderach, is "the Opener of the Way."

As witness the above, certainly something Frank Herbert's masterpiece was for me.

The Opener of the Way.
Something that DUNE will never cease to be.

Prologue To Dune: The Butlerian Jihad

Dr. Willis E. McNelly
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In the light of recent talk about prequels to Dune based on the Butlerian Jihad, Dune fans might be interested in knowing that this concept of writing a novel or novels about the BJ is not new. Rather, it is an idea I originated about a year before FH's death. I conceived of a prequel called "Prologue to Dune: the Butlerian Jihad." Its basic structure and plot outline would be the extensive material on the BJ contained in the Dune Encyclopedia. I discussed the idea with Frank on the phone at some length - and suggested that he and I might collaborate on the novel. He thought it was a good idea and also suggested that I draft a general outline and send it to him. After all, collaboration was something that he had done before.

I then proceeded to develop an extensive outline, including a rich panoply of characters, some quite unusual methods of handling the narrative, plot twists and so on. I wrote a suggested first chapter, about 2000 words long and then mailed all this material to him, but his tragic final illness kept him from answering.

A year or so after his death I proposed the idea to Berkley suggesting that I write this prologue myself, but received no answer. They might have been concerned with copyright problems or my alleged inexperience in writing professional fiction.

A bit later, I sent all of the material to Brian Herbert, with whom I was on professional terms although we had never met. Because he had once praised The Dune Encyclopedia in a personal letter to me written in the fall of 1990, calling it a "masterpiece," I suggested that he and I collaborate on my proposed prequel about the Butlerian Jihad to be derived from that work. Unfortunately he also did not reply.

As a consequence, I never went any further with my idea other than

the outline and the first chapter. Only a very few persons have ever read that chapter, and I do not intend to post either it or my detailed outline, cast of characters, proposed methods of story telling, and so on. However, the very few who have read the material have all praised the concept as well as the chapter itself.

Another reason I did not proceed was the question of primary and secondary copyright. While FH had created the idea of the latter day Luddite rebellion which he called "The Butlerian Jihad," and incorporated at least the idea of the anti-machine destruction which swept the Dune universe while giving virtually no details of what had happened, my writers and I created every notion about the specifics of that anti-machine galactic wide orgy of destruction which are found in the DE. For example, conceiving of my heroine as if she were a reincarnated Joan of Arc, I named her "Jehanne" Butler, and in a very thinly disguised bit of word play, I gave her husband the name "Thet'r," an obvious anagram of "Rhett" Butler. Everything in the DE concerning the Butlerian Jihad follows from that concept, and hence, I suppose I could be said to "own" it. But that is a legal question and I am not an attorney.

Parenthetically, I have an extensive paper trail concerning all of this material save for the phone calls.

To be sure, FH might have had some other Butler in mind when he created the idea in the first place, but he never mentioned it to me, and he had ample opportunity when we discussed the possible collaboration. We also discussed, albeit briefly, the posibility of collaborating on an interim novel about the oxygen catastrophe which overtook Arrakis when its primary source of oxygen, the sand worms, began to shrink in number. But we both recalled that Edgar Rice Burroughs had written about a similar planetary wide oxygen deprivation in one of his early Mars books, so we went no further than that, although I did refer to it in my 1983 Memoriam to him which has been widely circulated on various sites.

I have asked that this be posted so that the true Dune fans on the a.f.d. line will be made aware of an alternate Dune reality.

Dr. Willis E. McNelly

PROLOGUE TO DUNE: THE BUTLERIAN JIHAD

by Willis E. McNelly

Take care that you note beginnings carefully. After all, is it not true that the Butlerian Jihad was named after her? Who else in the entire history of humanity has deserved such an honor, if it is indeed an honor to be remembered as the one whose horror at inhumanity caused the death of countless billions, yet set the universe free. We are considering ends and means here. Did the unnecessary, even cruel, death of one fetus warrant the extinction of billions of people and the death of thousands of planets?

An autumn morning on Komos. In the distance the sun flared over the horizon, gleaming the green hills with burgeoning light. The fields, ripe with pundi rice and maize, glowed warm, heralding the birth of the day. A few spare figures bent over the ripe tassles of the maize, their arms flashing like signal flags — up, down, up, down, up down. Jehanne observed them closely. If they returned before noon, she knew that Thet'r would prepare for the harvest It should begin today. Tomororow, certainly. Already delayed nearly a fortnight, the empty granaries waited silently for the rich sloughing sound of ton after ton of grain pouring into them.

If the bent figures straightened and remained in the fields and gave her only a casual wave she would not notify her husband. She would know that the kernals needed a bit more of Komos' beneficent sun for ripeness, more time for the fullness of the ear. After all, she mused, is not my homeland the granary of the star system? Do not myriads of trading ships bring their electronic trinkets and glistening toys to Komos in exchange for untold tons of wheat, rice, maize, barley, lentils, soy . . . the list of crops was endless, she knew. Never in history had they failed. Komans always lived in harmony with earth, soil, water, crops, life. It was their faith, their religion, their way of life. Komos *was* life. Komans — and Jehanne Butler was a Koman, Koman born, Koman bred, Koman nurtured — worshipped life.

She fell to her knees quickly, circled her face and chest with the triple circle of adoration to the Goddess Kubebe, rose again almost as quickly and entered her study. Whether or not the crops came in today or tomorrow or even next week made little difference, she thought. Years in the future, her daughter would never know if they had been a day or two late in the year of her birth, the 769th year of the independence of Kubebe. All Jehanne could think of at the moment was the impending birth of Sarah only a few months ahead. The crops would be born when they were ready. Her daughter would be born when she was ready. Ripeness is all, she thought.

In her room she began her morning meditation. To a Bene Gesserit of the second rank, her prayers were as much a part of her life as air. Because her medical appointment for pre-natal check up was scheduled in a few hours, she began with the mantra for health.

> "Kubebe, giver of life and breath," she chanted.
> "Give my child strength.
> Let her grow in me.
> Let her live, let her live, let her live."

She repeated it six times, and then turned to her daily self-examination. Her BG awareness probed every part of her body. She was well. Her baby was nearly four months in utero and she was well too. All was well.

Rising, she turned to the communication panel, punched a few digits and waited as the vidscreen cleared. Out of the silver-grey blankness a face formed. It was a countenance Jehanne knew well, the thin, warm but hardened visage of Reverend Mother Elena Petrovna Mahama, Jehanne's tutor on distant Wallach IX.

"So, Sister Jehanne, why do you call me this late autumn morning?" The voice was quizzical, and a half smile formed on the moving lips. "What brings you" the voice was ironic now "to honor your tutor with this call?"

Jehanne was silent a moment. RM Elena's face always made her think of the cold days on Wallach IX. For a moment Jehanne was once more a thin frightened girl cowering in terror before the

unknown. Quickly Jehanne muttered a few words. "Fear is the mindkiller," she began, then choked them off so RM Elena would not recognize the Litany against Fear.

"Nothing, really, mother," she said. " Simply that I want to share with you my great news. In a few years the Sisterhood will have a new member, my daughter Sarah. She stirred with life this morning. And you do recall what the Truthsayer once said. Do you really think it will happen?" Jehanne seemed almost childlike in her question, her anxiety belying her three decades of life.

"Hush, child." The murmur from the screen was so quiet that Jehanne wondered briefly if Elena was using the Voice on her to soothe her feelings, calm her fears, yet refuse to answer the question. "Have you forgotten what the master breeding plan has suggested? To be sure, we have no absolute certainty that Sarah in the fullness of time will mother the Kwisatz Haderach but we have not worked this patiently for tens of centuries with our breeding lines to fail of our objective now. This time we know." The face brightened a bit and her tone emphasized the word once more. "Yes, child, this time we know."

"Yes, mother, I too am certain." Jehanne turned away from the vidscreen briefly and breathed deeply three, four times, then returned to view. Only a moment had passed. "Mother, may I not know who will be Our Saviour's father? After all, I am to bear his mother." There. The question was out and Jehanne hoped that her two decades of BG training had enabled her to ask it - certainly not for the first time or even for the hundredth, but finally asked it in such as way that Elena must answer this time.

"We have debated whether or not to tell you, my daughter" the thin face answered. "Most of the members of the Council hold for silence. Total silence. Nothing must be permitted to interfere with the coming of Him who will span Time and Space. Should you know too much, it might affect your attitude. Remember the ancient saying of the long dead Terran sage. 'The observer can influence the observed.' We do not want you being affected and certainly after Sarah is born, she must not know either. Her marriage or her betrothal to the KH," she used the initials so carefully, "will be performed in the usual BG way. It will be

arranged, and Sarah will do her duty because she will be a BG and because she will be a Sister, she will be a Mother." Elena's lips parted a trifle with the wordplay as if she were pleased with herself.

Jehanne caught the qualification in the words. "Most members, Reverend Mother?" The honorific title caused the face on the screen to cock an eyebrow. Jehanne repeated. "Most members? How do you hold, Mother? Do you feel that I should know? Do you not know me well enough to realize that I would never in thought, word, deed, action or non-action, never by commission or omission interfere with my place in destiny or my daughter's role in history. Never. Nothing could force me to alter history. Nothing. Surely you know that. Our two decades together must have taught you something about my character." RM Elena Petrovna Mahama hesitated. Her lips pursed and then parted in an enchanting smile. Jehanne saw it and warmed just as she had nearly 20 years earlier. Then the smile had comforted the hurt, the pain, the sense of loss the child had felt. Now it was reassuring.

"I cannot answer directly Jehanne," she said. "Simply because I do not know. None of us do. The breeding indices tell us that any of perhaps a half dozen males to be born this year may be the father. The percentages vary widely for each, but the unknowns in their gene banks may sport. May drop a KH or may throw an oaf. Eugenics is not an exact science even after all of our experimenting."

"Yes, Mother, I know, I know, I know. We BG have been working toward Our Savior for ten thousand years - perhaps longer. His immanent Incarnation in the body of my yet-to-be born daughter gives me more than a passing interest. Surely you must understand that, and surely you can forgive my wonder. It is not simple curiosity. I want my child to know from the day of her birth that she has a great destiny. Surely her womb will be blessed. All I want is to help her come to her destiny with life, joy, and love."

"Patience, child." The deeply wrinkled face on the screen seemed set in it ways, determined to mollify Jehanne. "Remember that we chose your husband for you and that we told you to bear a girl. The ways of Our Order are hard even for its members to understand, but it has achieved great success for untold century after century, planet

after planet, eon after eon. Trust me once more."

"Very well, then Mother," Jehanne finally replied. "I must trust to Kubebe to speak to me in my dreams, to point the way toward the child who in twenty years will marry my Sarah and father Our Savior, the One Whom we have awaited for tens upon tens of centuries. That He will come in my lifetime is enough for me. I shall wait."

"Child, is your health good?" the picture on the screen asked.

"Yes, of course, but I must visit the medics for my normal pre-natal checkup this afternoon," Jehanne said. "Their machines will poke me, puncture me, drain a few milliliters of blood, test me, weigh me, and then spit out the results on some printer or screen. I'll never even see a human to say nothing of a doctor or a Suk surgeon. The medic machines have always served me well but I long for the human touch from time to time. Plasteel will never replace flesh, no matter how perceptive the diagnostic chips may be." The young woman's BG awareness came to the fore. "I know my own body well enough to tell them everything they want to know. And more too. You know, don't you Mother, that I can recall the very moment when Thet'r's sperm pierced the egg, the instant of conception?"

"Yes, daughter, yes" Jehanne bristled at the condescending voice on the screen. Then as though it read her mind across the light years it went on. "I speak to you with such concern because the work of hundreds of generations rests on your body, your mind, your baby. Call me when you return from the clinic." The voice softened. "I have been your Mother in the order, but I also feel like your mother in the flesh. Call me." The screen darkened, and Jehanne began to dress for the day.